JEAN-CHRISTOPHE

JOURNEY'S END

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP
THE BURNING BUSH
THE NEW DAWN

ROMAIN ROLLAND

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ROMAIN ROLLAND

This author's great musical novel appears in France in ten volumes and in its English translation in three volumes as follows:

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JEAN-CHRISTOPHE: JOURNEY'S END

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

THE BURNING BUSH THE NEW DAWN

Each, translated by Gilbert Cannan, $1.50 *net.*

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Romain Rolland

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THE BURNING BUSH
THE NEW DAWN

BY

ROMAIN ROLLAND

Translated by
GILBERT CANNAN

WITH PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

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LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE

JOURNEY'S END

I

In spite of the success which was beginning to materialize outside France, the two friends found their financial position very slow in mending. Every now and then there recurred moments of penury when they were obliged to go without food. They made up for it by eating twice as much as they needed when they had money. But, on the whole, it was a trying existence.

For the time being they were in the period of the lean kine. Christophe had stayed up half the night to finish a dull piece of musical transcription for Hecht: he did not get to bed until dawn, and slept like a log to make up for lost time. Olivier had gone out early: he had a lecture to give at the other end of Paris. About eight o'clock the porter came with the letters, and rang the bell. As a rule he did not wait for them to come, but just slipped the letters under the door. This morning he went on knocking. Only half awake, Christophe went to the door growling: he paid no attention to what the smiling, loquacious porter was saying about an article in the paper, but just took the letters without looking at them, pushed the door to without closing it, went to bed, and was soon fast asleep once more.

An hour later he woke up with a start on hearing some one in his room: and he was amazed to see a strange face at the foot of his bed, a complete stranger bowing gravely to him. It was a journalist, who, finding the door open, had entered without ceremony. Christophe was furious, and jumped out of bed:

"What the devil are you doing here?" he shouted.

He grabbed his pillow to hurl it at the intruder, who skipped back. He explained himself. A reporter of the *Nation* wished

to interview M. Krafft about the article which had appeared in the *Grand Journal.*

"What article?"

"Haven't you read it?"

The reporter began to tell him what it was about.

Christophe went to bed again. If he had not been so sleepy he would have kicked the fellow out: but it was less trouble to let him talk. He curled himself up in the bed, closed his eyes, and pretended to be asleep. And very soon he would really have been off, but the reporter stuck to his guns, and in a loud voice read the beginning of the article. At the very first words Christophe pricked up his ears. M. Krafft was referred to as the greatest musical genius of the age. Christophe forgot that he was pretending to be asleep, swore in astonishment, sat up in bed, and said:

"They are mad! Who has been pulling their legs?"

The reporter seized the opportunity, and stopped reading to ply Christophe with a series of questions, which he answered unthinkingly. He had picked up the paper, and was gazing in utter amazement at his own portrait, which was printed as large as life on the front page: but he had no time to read the article, for another journalist entered the room. This time Christophe was really angry. He told them to get out: but they did not comply until they had made hurried notes of the furniture in the room, and the photographs on the wall, and the features of the strange being who, between laughter and anger, thrust them out of the room, and, in his nightgown, took them to the door and bolted it after them.

But it was ordained that he should not be left in peace that day. He had not finished dressing when there came another knock at the door, a prearranged knock which was only known to a few of their friends. Christophe opened the door, and found himself face to face with yet another stranger, whom he was just about to dismiss in a summary fashion, when the man protested that he was the author of the article. . . . How are you to get rid of a man who regards you as a genius! Christophe had grumpily to submit to his admirer's effusions. He was amazed at the sudden notoriety which had come like a bolt from the blue, and he wondered if, without knowing

it, he had had a masterpiece produced the evening before. But he had no time to find out. The journalist had come to drag him, whether he liked it or not, there and then, to the offices of the paper where the editor, the great Arsène Gamache himself, wished to see him: the car was waiting downstairs. Christophe tried to get out of it: but, in spite of himself, he was so naïvely responsive to the journalist's friendly protestations that in the end he gave way.

Ten minutes later he was introduced to a potentate in whose presence all men trembled. He was a sturdy little man, about fifty, short and stout, with a big round head, gray hair brushed up, a red face, a masterful way of speaking, a thick, affected accent, and every now and then he would break out into a choppy sort of volubility. He had forced himself on Paris by his enormous self-confidence. A business man, with a knowledge of men, naïve and deep, passionate, full of himself, he identified his business with the business of France, and even with the affairs of humanity. His own interests, the prosperity of his paper, and the *salus publica,* all seemed to him to be of equal importance and to be narrowly associated. He had no doubt that any man who wronged him, wronged France also: and to crush an adversary, he would in perfectly good faith have overthrown the Government. However, he was by no means incapable of generosity. He was an idealist of the after-dinner order, and loved to be a sort of God Almighty, and to lift some poor devil or other out of the mire, by way of demonstrating the greatness of his power, whereby he could make something out of nothing, make and unmake Ministers, and, if he had cared to, make and unmake Kings. His sphere was the universe. He would make men of genius, too, if it so pleased him.

That day he had just "made" Christophe.

It was Olivier who in all innocence had belled the cat.

Olivier, who could do nothing to advance his own interests, and had a horror of notoriety, and avoided journalists like the plague, took quite another view of these things where his friend was in question. He was like those loving mothers, the right-living women of the middle-class, those irreproachable wives,

who would sell themselves to procure any advantage for their rascally young sons.

Writing for the reviews, and finding himself in touch with a number of critics and dilettanti, Olivier never let slip an opportunity of talking about Christophe: and for some time past he had been surprised to find that they listened to him. He could feel a sort of current of curiosity, a mysterious rumor flying about literary and polite circles. What was its origin? Were there echoes of newspaper opinion, following on the recent performances of Christophe's work in England and Germany? It seemed impossible to trace it to any definite source. It was one of those frequent phenomena of those men who sniff the air of Paris, and can tell the day before, more exactly than the meteorological observatory of the tower of Saint-Jacques, what wind is blowing up for the morrow, and what it will bring with it. In that great city of nerves, through which electric vibrations pass, there are invisible currents of fame, a latent celebrity which precedes the actuality, the vague gossip of the drawing-rooms, the *nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade*, which, at a given moment, bursts out in a puffing article, the blare of the trumpet which drives the name of the new idol into the thickest heads. Sometimes that trumpet-blast alienates the first and best friends of the man whose glory it proclaims. And yet they are responsible for it.

So Olivier had a share in the article in the *Grand Journal*. He had taken advantage of the interest displayed in Christophe, and had carefully stoked it up with adroitly worded information. He had been careful not to bring Christophe directly into touch with the journalists, for he was afraid of an outburst. But at the request of the *Grand Journal* he had slyly introduced Christophe to a reporter in a café without his having any suspicion. All these precautions only pricked curiosity, and made Christophe more interesting. Olivier had never had anything to do with publicity before: he had not stopped to consider that he was setting in motion a machine which, once it got going, it was impossible to direct or control.

He was in despair when, on his way to his lecture, he read the article in the *Grand Journal*. He had not foreseen such a calamity. Above all, he had not expected it to come so soon.

He had reckoned on the paper waiting to make sure and verify its facts before it published anything. He was too naïve. If a newspaper takes the trouble to discover a new celebrity, it is, of course, for its own sake, so that its rivals may not have the honor of the discovery. It must lose no time, even if it means knowing nothing whatever about the person in question. But an author very rarely complains: if he is admired, he has quite as much understanding as he wants.

The *Grand Journal,* after setting out a few ridiculous stories about Christophe's struggles, representing him as a victim of German despotism, an apostle of liberty, forced to fly from Imperial Germany and take refuge in France, the home and shelter of free men,—(a fine pretext for a Chauvinesque tirade!) —plunged into lumbering praise of his genius, of which it knew nothing,—nothing except a few tame melodies, dating from Christophe's early days in Germany, which Christophe, who was ashamed of them, would have liked to have seen destroyed. But if the author of the article knew nothing at all about Christophe's work, he made up for it in his knowledge of his plans— or rather such plans as he invented for him. A few words let fall by Christophe or Olivier, or even by Goujart, who pretended to be well-informed, had been enough for him to construct a fanciful Jean-Christophe, "a Republican genius,—the great musician of democracy." He seized the opportunity to decry various contemporary French musicians, especially the most original and independent among them, who set very little store by democracy. He only excepted one or two composers, whose electoral opinions were excellent in his eyes. It was annoying that their music was not better. But that was a detail. And besides, his eulogy of these men, and even his praise of Christophe, was of not nearly so much account as his criticism of the rest. In Paris, when you read an article eulogizing a man's work, it is always as well to ask yourself:

"Whom is he decrying?"

Olivier went hot with shame as he read the paper, and said to himself:

"A fine thing I've done!"

He could hardly get through his lecture. As soon as he had finished he hurried home. What was his consternation to find

that Christophe had already gone out with the journalists! He delayed lunch for him. Christophe did not return. Hours passed, and Olivier grew more and more anxious and thought:

"What a lot of foolish things they will make him say!"

About three o'clock Christophe came home quite lively. He had had lunch with Arsène Gamache, and his head was a little muzzy with the champagne he had drunk. He could not understand Olivier's anxiety, who asked him in fear and trembling what he had said and done.

"What have I been doing? I've had a splendid lunch. I haven't had such a good feed for a long time."

He began to recount the menu.

"And wine. . . . I had wine of every color."

Olivier interrupted him to ask who was there.

"Who was there? . . . I don't know. There was Gamache, a little round man, true as gold: Clodomir, the writer of the article, a charming fellow: three or four journalists whom I didn't know, very jolly, all very nice and charming to me—the cream of good fellows."

Olivier did not seem to be convinced. Christophe was astonished at his small enthusiasm.

"Haven't you read the article?"

"Yes. I have. Have you read it?"

"Yes. . . . That is to say, I just glanced at it. I haven't had time."

"Well: read it."

Christophe took it up. At the first words he spluttered.

"Oh! The idiot!" he said.

He roared with laughter.

"Bah!" he went on. "These critics are all alike. They know nothing at all about it."

But as he read farther he began to lose his temper: it was too stupid, it made him look ridiculous. What did they mean by calling him "a Republican musician"; it did not mean anything. . . . Well, let the fib pass. . . . But when they set his "Republican" art against the "sacristy art" of the masters who had preceded him,—(he whose soul was nourished by the souls of those great men),—it was too much. . . .

"The swine! They're trying to make me out an idiot! . . ."

And then, what was the sense of using him as a cudgel to thwack talented French musicians, whom he loved more or less, —(though rather less than more),—though they knew their trade, and honored it? And—worst of all—with an incredible want of tact he was credited with odious sentiments about his country! . . . No, that, that was beyond endurance. . . .

"I shall write and tell them so," said Christophe.

Olivier intervened.

"No, no," he said, "not now! You are too excited. To-morrow, when you are cooler. . . ."

Christophe stuck to it. When he had anything to say he could not wait until the morrow. He promised Olivier to show him his letter. The precaution was useful. The letter was duly revised, so as to be confined practically to the rectification of the opinions about Germany with which he had been credited, and then Christophe ran and posted it.

"Well," he said, when he returned, "that will save half the harm being done: the letter will appear to-morrow."

Olivier shook his head doubtfully. He was still thoughtful, and he looked Christophe straight in the face, and said:

"Christophe, did you say anything imprudent at lunch?"

"Oh no," said Christophe with a laugh.

"Sure?"

"Yes, you coward."

Olivier was somewhat reassured. But Christophe was not. He had just remembered that he had talked volubly and unguardedly. He had been quite at his ease at once. It had never for a moment occurred to him to distrust any of them: they seemed so cordial, so well-disposed towards him! As, in fact, they were. We are always well-disposed to people when we have done them a good turn, and Christophe was so frankly delighted with it all that his joy infected them. His affectionate easy manners, his jovial sallies, his enormous appetite, and the celerity with which the various liquors vanished down his throat without making him turn a hair, were by no means displeasing to Arsène Gamache, who was himself a sturdy trencherman, coarse, boorish, and sanguine, and very contemptuous of people who had ill-health, and those who dared not eat and drink, and all the sickly Parisians. He judged a man by

his prowess at table. He appreciated Christophe. There and then he proposed to produce his *Gargantua* as an opera at the Opéra.—(The very summit of art was reached for these bourgeois French people in the production on the stage of the *Damnation of Faust,* or the *Nine Symphonies.*)—Christophe, who burst out laughing at the grotesqueness of the idea, had great difficulty in preventing him from telephoning his orders to the directors of the Opéra, or the Minister of Fine Arts.—(If Gamache were to be believed, all these important people were apparently at his beck and call.)—And, the proposal reminding him of the strange transmutation which had taken place in his symphonic poem, *David,* he went so far as to tell the story of the performance organized by Deputy Roussin to introduce his mistress to the public. Gamache, who did not like Roussin, was delighted: and Christophe, spurred on by the generous wines and the sympathy of his hearers, plunged into other stories, more or less indiscreet, the point of which was not lost on those present. Christophe was the only one to forget them when the party broke up. And now, on Olivier's question, they rushed back to his memory. He felt a little shiver run down his spine. For he did not deceive himself: he had enough experience to know what would happen: now that he was sober again he saw it as clearly as though it had actually happened: his indiscretions would be twisted and distorted, and scattered broadcast as malicious blabbing, his artistic sallies would be turned into weapons of war. As for his letter correcting the article, he knew as well as Olivier how much that would avail him: it is a waste of ink to answer a journalist, for he always has the last word.

Everything happened exactly to the letter as Christophe had foreseen it would. His indiscretions were published, his letter was not. Gamache only went so far as to write to him that he recognized the generosity of his feelings, and that his scruples were an honor to him: but he kept his scruples dark: and the falsified opinions attributed to Christophe went on being circulated, provoking biting criticism in the Parisian papers, and later in Germany, where much indignation was felt that a German artist should express himself with so little dignity about his country.

Christophe thought he would be clever, and take advantage of an interview by the reporter of another paper to protest his love for the *Deutsches Reich,* where, he said, people were at least as free as in the French Republic.—He was speaking to the representative of a Conservative paper, who at once credited him with anti-Republican views.

"Better and better!" said Christophe. "But what on earth has my music to do with politics?"

"It is usual with us," said Olivier. "Look at the battles that have taken place over Beethoven. Some people will have it that he was a Jacobin, others a mountebank, others still a Père Duchesne, and others a prince's lackey."

"He'd knock their heads together."

"Well, do the same."

Christophe only wished he could. But he was too amiable with people who were friendly towards him. Olivier never felt happy when he left him alone. For they were always coming to interview him: and it was no use Christophe promising to be guarded: he could not help being confidential and unreserved. He said everything that came into his head. Women journalists would come and make a fuss of him, and get him to talk about his sentimental adventures. Others would make use of him to speak ill of such-an-one, or so-and-so. When Olivier came in he would find Christophe utterly downcast.

"Another howler?" he would ask.

"Of course," Christophe would reply in despair.

"You are incorrigible!"

"I ought to be locked up. . . . But I swear that it is the last time."

"Yes, I know. Until the next. . . ."

"No. This really is the last."

Next day Christophe said triumphantly to Olivier:

"Another one came to-day. I shut the door in his face."

"Don't go too far," said Olivier. "Be careful with them. 'This animal is dangerous.' He will attack you if you defend yourself. . . . It is so easy for them to avenge themselves! They can twist the least little thing you may have said to their uses."

Christophe drew his hand across his forehead:

"Oh! Good Lord!"

"What's the matter?"

"When I shut the door in his face I told . . ."

"What?"

"The Emperor's joke."

"The Emperor's?"

"Yes. His or one of his people's. . . ."

"How awful! You'll see it to-morrow on the front page!"

Christophe shuddered. But, next day, what he saw was a description of his room, which the journalist had not seen, and a report of a conversation which he had not had with him.

The facts were more and more embellished the farther they spread. In the foreign papers they were garnished out of all recognition. Certain French articles having told how in his poverty he had transposed music for the guitar, Christophe learned from an English newspaper that he had played the guitar in the streets.

He did not only read eulogies. Far from it. It was enough for Christophe to have been taken up by the *Grand Journal,* for him to be taken to task by the other papers. They could not as a matter of dignity allow the possibility of a rival's discovering a genius whom they had ignored. Some of them were rabid about it. Others commiserated Christophe on his ill-luck. Goujart, annoyed at having the ground cut away from under his feet, wrote an article, as he said, to set people right on certain points. He wrote familiarly of his old friend Christophe, to whom, when he first came to Paris, he had been guide and comforter: he was certainly a highly gifted musician, but—(he was at liberty to say so, since they were friends)—very deficient in many ways, ill-educated, unoriginal, and inordinately vain; so absurdly to flatter his vanity, as had been done, was to serve him but ill at a time when he stood in need of a mentor who should be wise, learned, judicious, benevolent, and severe, etc.—(a fancy portrait of Goujart).—The musicians made bitter fun of it all. They affected a lofty contempt for an artist who had the newspapers at his back: and, pretending to be disgusted with the *vulgum pecus,* they refused the presents of Artaxerxes, which were not offered them. Some of them

abused Christophe: others overwhelmed him with their commiseration. Some of them—(his colleagues)—laid the blame on Olivier.—They were only too glad to pay him out for his intolerance and his way of holding aloof from them,—rather, if the truth were known, from a desire for solitude than from scorn of any of them. But men are least apt to pardon those who show that they can do without them.—Some of them almost went so far as to hint that he had made money by the articles in the *Grand Journal*. There were others who took upon themselves to defend Christophe against him: they appeared to be broken-hearted at Olivier's callousness in dragging a sensitive artist, a dreamer, ill-equipped for the battle of life,—Christophe, —into the turmoil of the market-place, where he could not but be ruined: for they regarded Christophe as a little boy not strong enough in the head to be allowed to go out alone. The future of this man, they said, was being ruined, for, even if he were not a genius, such good intentions and such tremendous industry deserved a better fate, and he was being intoxicated with incense of an inferior brand. It was a great pity. Why could they not leave him in his obscurity to go on working patiently for years?

Olivier might have had the answer pat:

"A man must eat to work. Who will give him his bread?"

But that would not have abashed them. They would have replied with their magnificent serenity:

"That is a detail. An artist must suffer. And what does a little suffering matter?"

Of course, they were men of the world, quite well off, who professed these Stoic theories. As the millionaire once said to the simple person who came and asked him to help a poverty-stricken artist:

"But, sir, Mozart died of poverty."

They would have thought it very bad taste on Olivier's part if he had told them that Mozart would have asked nothing better than to go on living, and that Christophe was determined to do so.

Christophe was getting heartily sick of the vulgar tittle-tattle. He began to wonder if it were going on forever.—But it was all

over in a fortnight. The newspapers gave up talking about him. However, he had become known. When his name was mentioned, people said, not:

"The author of *David* or *Gargantua,*"

but:

"Oh yes! The *Grand Journal* man! . . ."

He was famous.

Olivier knew it by the number of letters that came for Christophe, and even for himself, in his reflected glory: offers from librettists, proposals from concert-agents, declarations of friendship from men who had formerly been his enemies, invitations from women. His opinion was asked, for newspaper inquiries, about anything and everything: the depopulation of France, idealist art, women's corsets, the nude on the stage,—and did he believe that Germany was decadent, or that music had reached its end, etc., etc. They used to laugh at them all. But, though he laughed, lo and behold! Christophe, that Huron, steadily accepted the invitations to dinner! Olivier could not believe his eyes.

"You?" he said.

"I! Certainly," replied Christophe jeeringly. "You thought you were the only man who could go and see the beautiful ladies? Not at all, my boy! It's my turn now. I want to amuse myself!"

"You? Amuse yourself? My dear old man!"

The truth was that Christophe had for so long lived shut up in his own room that he felt a sudden longing to get away from it. Besides, he took a naïve delight in tasting his new fame. He was terribly bored at parties, and thought the people idiotic. But when he came home he used to take a malicious pleasure in telling Olivier how much he had enjoyed himself. He would go to people's houses once, but never again: he would invent the wildest excuses, with a frightful want of tact, to get out of their renewed invitations. Olivier would be scandalized, and Christophe would shout with laughter. He did not go to their houses to spread his fame, but to replenish his store of life, his collection of expressions and tones of voice—all the material of form, and sound, and color, with which an artist has periodically to enrich his palette. A musician does not

feed only on music. An inflection of the human voice, the rhythm of a gesture, the harmony of a smile, contain more suggestion of music for him that another man's symphony. But it must be said that the music of faces and human souls is as stale and lacking in variety in polite society as the music of polite musicians. Each has a manner and becomes set in it. The smile of a pretty woman is as stereotyped in its studied grace as a Parisian melody. The men are even more insipid than the women. Under the debilitating influence of society, their energy is blunted, their original characters rot away and finally disappear with a frightful rapidity. Christophe was struck by the number of dead and dying men he met among the artists: there was one young musician, full of life and genius, whom success had dulled, stupefied, and wiped out of existence: he thought of nothing but swallowing down the flattery in which he was smothered, enjoying himself, and sleeping. What he would be like twenty years later was shown in another corner of the room, in the person of an old pomaded *maestro,* who was rich, famous, a member of all the Academies, at the very height of his career, and, though apparently he had nothing to fear and no more wires to pull, groveled before everything and everybody, and was fearful of opinion, power, and the Press, dared not say what he thought, and thought nothing at all—a man who had ceased to exist, showing himself off, an ass saddled with the relics of his own past life.

Behind all these artists and men of intellect who had been great, or might have been great, there was certain to be some woman preying upon them. They were all dangerous, both the fools and those who were by no means fools: both those who loved and those who loved themselves: the best of them were the worst: for they were all the more certain to snuff out the artist with their immoderate affection, which made them in all good faith try to domesticate genius, turn it to their own uses, drag it down, prune it, pare it down, scent it, until they had brought it into line with their sensibility, their petty vanity, their mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the world they lived in.

Although Christophe only passed through that section of society, he saw enough of it to feel its danger. More than one

woman, of course, tried to take possession of him for her circle, to press him into her service: and, of course, Christophe nibbled at the hook baited with friendly words and alluring smiles. But for his sturdy common sense and the disquieting spectacle of the transformations already effected in the men about them by these modern Circes, he would not have escaped uncontaminated. But he had no mind to swell the herd of these lovely goose-girls. The danger would have been greater for him if there had not been so many of them angling for him. Now that everybody, men and women, were properly convinced that they had a genius in their midst, as usual, they set to work to stifle him. Such people, when they see a flower, have only one idea: to put it in a pot,—a bird: to put it in a cage,—a free man: to turn him into a smooth lackey.

Christophe was shaken for a moment, pulled himself together, and sent them all packing.

Fate is ironical. Those who do not care slip through the meshes of the net: but those who are suspicious, those who are prudent, and forewarned, are never suffered to escape. It was not Christophe who was caught in the net of Paris, but Olivier.

He had benefited by his friend's success: Christophe's fame had given him a reflected glory. He was better known now, for having been mentioned in a few papers as the man who had discovered Christophe, than for anything he had written during the last six years. He was included in many of the invitations that came for Christophe: and he went with him, meaning carefully and discreetly to look after him. No doubt he was too much absorbed in doing so to look after himself. Love passed by and caught him.

She was a little fair girl, charmingly slender, with soft hair waving in little ripples about her pure narrow forehead: she had fine eyebrows and rather heavy eyelids, eyes of a periwinkle blue, a delicately carved nose with sensitive nostrils; her temples were slightly hollowed: she had a capricious chin, and a mobile, witty, and rather sensual mouth, turning up at the corners, and the *Parmigianninesque* smile of a pure faun. She had a long, delicate throat, a pretty waist, a slender, elegant figure, and a happy, pensive expression in her girlish face, in every line of

which there was the disturbing poetic mystery of the waking spring,—*Frühlingserwachen.* Her name was Jacqueline Langeais.

She was not twenty. She came of a rich Catholic family, of great distinction and broad-mindedness. Her father was a clever engineer, a man of some invention, clear-headed and open to new ideas, who had made a fortune, thanks to his own hard work, his political connections, and his marriage. He had married both for love and money—(the proper marriage for love for such people)—a pretty woman, very Parisian, who was bred in the world of finance. The money had stayed: but love had gone. However, he had managed to preserve a few sparks of it, for it had been very ardent on both sides: but they did not stickle for any exaggerated notion of fidelity. They went their ways and had their pleasures: and they got on very well together, as friends, selfishly, unscrupulously, warily.

Their daughter was a bond between them, though she was the object of an unspoken rivalry between them: for they both loved her jealously. They both saw themselves in her with their pet faults idealized by the grace of childhood: and each strove cunningly to steal her from the other. And the child had in due course become conscious of it, with the artful candor of such little creatures, who are only too ready to believe that the universe gravitates round themselves: and she turned it to good account. She had them perpetually outbidding each other for her affection. She never had a whim but she was sure that one of them would indulge it if the other refused: and the other would be so vexed at being outdone that she would at once be offered an even greater indulgence than the first. She had been dreadfully spoiled: and it was very fortunate for her that there was no evil in her nature,—outside the egoism common to almost all children, though in children who are too rich and too much pampered it assumes various morbid shapes, due to the absence of difficulties and the want of any goal to aim at.

Though they adored her, neither M. nor Madame Langeais ever thought of sacrificing their own personal convenience to her. They used to leave the child alone, for the greater part

of the day, to gratify her thousand and one fancies. She had plenty of time for dreaming, and she wasted none of it. She was precocious and quick to grasp at incautious remarks let fall in her presence—(for her parents were never very guarded in what they said),—and when she was six years old she used to tell her dolls love-stories, the characters in which were husband, wife, and lover. It goes without saying that she saw no harm in it. Directly she began to perceive a shade of feeling underlying the words it was all over for the dolls: she kept her stories to herself. There was in her a strain of innocent sensuality, which rang out in the distance like the sound of invisible bells, over there, over there, on the other side of the horizon. She did not know what it was. Sometimes it would come wafted on the wind: it came she did not know from whence, and wrapped her round and made the blood mount to her cheeks, and she would lose her breath in the fear and pleasure of it. She could not understand it. And then it would disappear as strangely as it had come. There was never another sound. Hardly more than a faint buzzing, an imperceptible resonance, fainter and fainter, in the blue air. Only she knew that it was yonder, on the other side of the mountain, and thither she must go, go as soon as possible: for there lay happiness. Ah! If only she could reach it! . . .

In the meanwhile, until she should reach that land of happiness, she wove strange dreams of what she would find there. For the chief occupation of the child's mind was guessing at its nature. She had a friend of her own age, Simone Adam, with whom she used often to discuss these great subjects. Each brought to bear on them the light of her twelve years' experience, conversations overheard and stolen reading. On tip-toe, clinging to the crannies in the stones, the two little girls strained to peer over the old wall which hid the future from them. But it was all in vain, and it was idle for them to pretend that they could see through the chinks: they could see nothing at all. They were both a mixture of innocence, poetic salaciousness, and Parisian irony. They used to say the most outrageous things without knowing it, and they were always making mountains out of molehills. Jacqueline, who was always prying, without anybody to find fault with her, used to burrow in all her

father's books. Fortunately, she was protected from coming to any harm by her very innocence and her own young, healthy instincts: an unduly described scene or a coarse word disgusted her at once: she would drop the book at once, and she passed through the most infamous company, like a frightened cat through puddles of dirty water,—without so much as a splash.

As a rule, novels did not attract her: they were too precise, too dry. But books of poetry used to make her heart flutter with emotion and hope of finding the key to the riddle,—love-poems, of course. They coincided to a certain extent with her childish outlook on things. The poets did not see things as they were, they imagined them through the prism of desire or regret: they seemed, like herself, to be peering through the chinks of the old wall. But they knew much more, they knew all the things which she was longing to know, and clothed them with sweet, mysterious words, which she had to unravel with infinite care to find . . . to find . . . Ah! She could find nothing, but she was always sure that she was on the very brink of finding it. . . .

Their curiosity was indomitable. They would thrill as they whispered verses of Alfred de Musset and Sully Prudhomme, into which they read abyss on abyss of perversity: they used to copy them out, and ask each other about the hidden meanings of passages, which generally contained none. These little women of thirteen, who knew nothing of love, used, in their innocent effrontery, to discuss, half in jest, half in earnest, love and the sweets of love: and, in school, under the fatherly eye of the master—a very polite and mild old gentleman—verses like the following, which he confiscated one day, when they made him gasp:

> "Let, oh! let me clasp you in my arms,
> And in your kisses drink insensate love
> Drop by drop in one long draught. . . ."

They attended lectures at a fashionable and very prosperous school, the teachers of which were Masters of Art of the University. There they found material for their sentimental aspirations. Almost all the girls were in love with their masters. If they were young and not too ugly, that was quite

enough for them to make havoc of their pupils' hearts—who would work like angels to please their sultan. And they would weep when he gave them bad marks in their examinations: though they did not care when anybody else did the same. If he praised them, they would blush and go pale by turns, and gaze at him coquettishly in gratitude. And if he called them aside to give them advice or pay them a compliment, they were in Paradise. There was no need for him to be an eagle to win their favor. When the gymnastic instructor took Jacqueline in his arms to lift her up to the trapeze, she would be in ecstasies. And what furious emulation there was between them! How coaxingly and with what humility they would make eyes at the master to attract his attention from a presumptuous rival! At lectures, when he opened his lips to speak, pens and pencils would be hastily produced to take down what he said. They made no attempt to understand: the chief thing was not to lose a syllable. And while they went on writing and writing without ceasing, with stealthy glances to take in their idol's play of expression and gestures, Jacqueline and Simone would whisper to each other:

"Do you think he would look nice in a tie with blue spots?"

Then they had a chromo-lithographic ideal, based on romantic and fashionable books of verses, and poetic fashion-plates,—they fell in love with actors, virtuosi, authors, dead and alive—Mounet-Sully, Samain, Debussy,—they would exchange glances with young men at concerts, or in a drawing-room, or in the street, and at once begin to weave fanciful and passionate love-affairs,—they could not help always wanting to fall in love, to have their lives filled with a love-affair, to find some excuse for being in love. Jacqueline and Simone used to confide everything to each other: proof positive that they did not feel anything much: it was the best sort of preventive to keep them from ever having any deep feeling. On the other hand, it became a sort of chronic illness with them: they were the first to laugh at it, but they used lovingly to cultivate it. They excited each other. Simone was more romantic and more cautious, and used to invent wilder stories. But Jacqueline, being more sincere and more ardent, came nearer to realizing them. She was twenty times on the brink of the most hopeless

folly.—However, she did not commit herself, as is the way with young people. There are times when these poor little crazy creatures—(such as we have all been)—are within an ace, some of suicide, others of flinging themselves into the arms of the first man who comes along. Only, thank God, almost all of them stop short at that. Jacqueline wrote countless rough drafts of passionate letters to men whom she hardly knew by sight: but she never sent any of them, except one enthusiastic letter, unsigned, to an ugly, vulgar, selfish critic, who was as cold-hearted as he was narrow-minded. She fell in love with him over a few lines in which she had discovered a rare wealth of sensibility. She was fired also by a great actor, who lived near her: whenever she passed his door she used to say to herself:

"Shall I go in?"

And once she made so bold as to go up to the door of his flat. When she found herself there, she turned and fled. What could she have talked to him about? She had nothing, nothing at all to say to him. She did not love him. And she knew it. In the greater part of her folly she was deceiving herself. And for the rest it was the old, old, delicious, stupid need of being in love. As Jacqueline was naturally intelligent, she knew that quite well, and it kept her from making a fool of herself. A fool who knows his folly is worth two who don't.

She went out a good deal. There were many young men who felt her charm, and more than one of them was in love with her. She did not care what harm she did. A pretty girl makes a cruel game of love. It seems to her quite natural that she should be loved, and never considers that she owes anything to those who love her: she is apt to believe that her lover is happy enough in loving her. It must be said, by way of excuse, that she has no idea of what love is, although she thinks of nothing else all day long. One is inclined to think that a young girl in society, brought up in the hot-house atmosphere of a great town, would be more precocious than a country girl: but the opposite is the case. Her reading and conversation have made her obsessed by love, so obsessed that in her idle life it often borders on mania: and sometimes it happens that she has read the play beforehand, and knows it word for word by heart.

But she never feels it. In love, as in art, it is useless to read what others have said: we can but say what we feel: and those who make haste to speak before they have anything to say are as likely as not to say nothing.

Jacqueline, like most young people, lived in an atmosphere clouded by the dust of the feelings of others, which, while it kept her in a perpetual fever, with her hands burning, and her throat dry, and her eyes sore, prevented her seeing anything. She thought she knew everything. It was not that she lacked the wish to know. She read and listened. She had picked up a deal of information, here and there, in scraps, from conversation and books. She even tried to read what was written in herself. She was much better than the world in which she lived, for she was more sincere.

There was one woman who had a good influence—only too brief—over her. This was a sister of her father's, a woman of between forty and fifty, who had never married. Tall, with regular features, though sad and lacking in beauty, Marthe Langeais was always dressed in black: she had a sort of stiff distinction of feature and movement: she spoke very little, and she had a deep voice, almost like a man's. But for the clear light in her intelligent gray eyes and the kind smile on her sad lips she would have passed unnoticed.

She only appeared at the Langeais' on certain days, when they were alone. Langeais had a great respect for her, though she bored him. Madame Langeais made no attempt to disguise from her husband how little pleasure his sister's visits gave her. However, they faced their duty, and had her to dinner once a week, and they did not let it appear too glaringly that they regarded it as a duty. Langeais used to talk about himself, which she always found interesting. Madame Langeais would think of something else, and, as a matter of habit, smile affably when she was spoken to. The dinner always went off very well, and she was invariably polite. Sometimes, even, she would be effusively affectionate when her tactful sister-in-law went away earlier than she had hoped: and Madame Langeais's charming smile would be most radiant when she had any particularly pleasant memories to think of. Marthe saw through

it all: very little escaped her eyes: and she saw many things in her brother's house which shocked and distressed her. But she never let it appear: what was the good? She loved her brother, and had been proud of his cleverness and success, like the rest of the family, who had not thought the triumph of the eldest son too dear a price to pay for their poverty. She, at least, had preserved her independence of opinion. She was as clever as he was, and of a finer moral fiber, more virile—(as the women of France so often are; they are much superior to the men),—and she knew him through and through: and when he asked her advice she used to give it frankly. But for a long time he had not asked it of her! He found it more prudent not to know, or—(for he knew the truth as much as she did),—to shut his eyes. She was proud, and drew aside. Nobody ever troubled to look into her inward life, and it suited the others to ignore her. She lived alone, went out very little, and had only a few not very intimate friends. It would have been very easy to her to turn her brother's influence and her own talents to account: but she did not do so. She had written a few articles for the leading reviews in Paris, historical and literary portraits, which had attracted some attention by their sober, just, and striking style. But she had gone no farther. She might have formed interesting friendships with certain distinguished men and women, who had shown a desire to know her, whom also she would, perhaps, have been glad to know. She did not respond to their advances. Though she had a reserved seat for a theater when the program contained music that she loved, she did not go: and though she had the opportunity of traveling to a place where she knew that she would find much pleasure, she preferred to stay at home. Her nature was a curious compound of stoicism and neurasthenia, which, however, in no wise impaired the integrity of her ideas. Her life was impaired, but not her mind. An old sorrow, known only to herself, had left its mark on her heart. And even more profound, even less suspected—unknown to herself, was the secret illness which had begun to prey upon her.—However, the Langeais saw only the clear expression of her eyes, which sometimes made them feel embarrassed.

Jacqueline used to take hardly any notice of her aunt in

the days when she was careless and gay—which was her usual condition when she was a child. But when she reached the age at which there occurs a mysterious change and growth in body and soul, which bring agony, disgust, terror, and fearful moments of depression in their train, and moments of absurd, horrible dizziness, which, happily, do not last, though they make their victim feel at the point of death,—the child, sinking and not daring to cry for help, found only her Aunt Marthe standing by her side and holding out her hand. Ah! the others were so far away! Her father and mother were as strangers to her, with their selfish affection, too satisfied with themselves to think of the small troubles of a doll of fourteen! But her aunt guessed them, and comforted her. She did not say anything. She only smiled: across the table she exchanged a kindly glance with Jacqueline, who felt that her aunt understood her, and she took refuge by her side. Marthe stroked Jacqueline's head and kissed her, and spoke no word.

The little girl trusted her. When her heart was heavy she would go and see her friend, who would know and understand as soon as she arrived; she would be met always with the same indulgent eyes, which would infect her with a little of their own tranquillity. She told her aunt hardly anything about her imaginary love-affairs: she was ashamed of them, and felt that there was no truth in them. But she confessed all the vague, profound uneasiness that was in her, and was more real, her only real trouble.

"Aunt," she would sigh sometimes, "I do so long to be happy!"

"Poor child!" Marthe would say, with a smile.

Jacqueline would lay her head in her aunt's lap, and kiss her hands as they caressed her face:

"Do you think I shall be happy? Aunt, tell me; do you think I shall be happy?"

"I don't know, my dear. It rather depends on yourself. . . . People can always be happy if they want to be."

Jacqueline was incredulous.

"Are you happy?"

Marthe smiled sadly:

"Yes."

"No? Really? Are you happy?"

"Don't you believe it?"

"Yes. But . . ."

Jacqueline stopped short.

"What is it?"

"I want to be happy, but not like you."

"Poor child! I hope so, too!" said Marthe.

"No." Jacqueline went on shaking her head decisively. "But I couldn't be."

"I should not have thought it possible, either. Life teaches one to be able to do many things."

"Oh! But I don't want to learn," protested Jacqueline anxiously. "I want to be happy in the way I want."

"You would find it very hard to say how!"

"I know quite well what I want."

She wanted many things. But when it came to saying what they were, she could only mention one, which recurred again and again, like a refrain:

"First of all, I want some one to love me."

Marthe went on sewing without a word. After a moment she said:

"What good will it be to you if you do not love?"

Jacqueline was taken aback, and exclaimed:

"But, aunt, of course I only mean some one I loved! All the rest don't count."

"And suppose you did not love anybody?"

"The idea! One loves always, always."

Marthe shook her head doubtfully.

"No," she said. "We don't love. We want to love. Love is the greatest gift of God. Pray to Him that He may grant it you."

"But suppose my love is not returned?"

"Even if your love is not returned, you will be all the happier."

Jacqueline's face fell: she pouted a little:

"I don't want that," she said. "It wouldn't give me any pleasure."

Marthe laughed indulgently, looked at Jacqueline, sighed, and then went on with her work.

"Poor child!" she said once more.

"Why do you keep on saying: 'Poor child'?" asked Jacqueline uneasily. "I don't want to be a poor child. I want—I want so much to be happy!"

"That is why I say: 'Poor child!'"

Jacqueline sulked for a little. But it did not last long. Marthe laughed at her so kindly that she was disarmed. She kissed her, pretending to be angry. But in their hearts children of that age are secretly flattered by predictions of suffering in later life, which is so far away. When it is afar off there is a halo of poetry round sorrow, and we dread nothing so much as a dull, even life.

Jacqueline did not notice that her aunt's face was growing paler and paler. She observed that Marthe was going out less and less, but she attributed it to her stay-at-home disposition, about which she used often to tease her. Once or twice, when she called, she had met the doctor coming out. She had asked her aunt:

"Are you ill?"

Marthe replied:

"It's nothing."

But now she had even given up her weekly dinner at the Langeais'. Jacqueline was hurt, and went and reproached her bitterly.

"My dear," said Marthe gently, "I am rather tired."

But Jacqueline would not listen to anything. That was a poor sort of excuse!

"It can't be very exhausting for you to come to our house for a couple of hours a week! You don't love me," she would say. "You love nothing but your own fireside."

But when at home she proudly told them how she had scolded her aunt, Langeais cut her short with:

"Let your aunt be! Don't you know that the poor creature is very ill!"

Jacqueline grew pale: and in a trembling voice she asked what was the matter with her aunt. They tried not to tell her. Finally, she found out that Marthe was dying of cancer: she had had it for some months.

For some days Jacqueline lived in a state of terror. She

was comforted a little when she saw her aunt. Marthe was mercifully not suffering any great pain. She still had her tranquil smile, which in her thin transparent face seemed to shine like the light of an inward lamp. Jacqueline said to herself:

"No. It is impossible. They must be mistaken. She would not be so calm. . . ."

She went on with the tale of her little confidences, to which Marthe listened with more interest than heretofore. Only, sometimes, in the middle of a conversation, her aunt would leave the room, without giving any sign to show that she was in pain: and she would not return until the attack was over, and her face had regained its serenity. She did not like anybody to refer to her condition, and tried to hide it: she had a horror of the disease that held her in its grip, and would not think of it: all her efforts were directed towards preserving the peace of her last months. The end came sooner than it was expected. Very soon she saw nobody but Jacqueline. Then Jacqueline's visits had to be curtailed. Then came the day of parting. Marthe was lying in her bed, which she had not left for some weeks, when she took a tender farewell of her little friend with a few gentle, comforting words. And then she shut herself up, to die.

Jacqueline passed through months of despair. Marthe's death came at the same time as the very worst hours of her moral distress, against which Marthe had been the only person who could help her. She was horribly deserted and alone. She needed the support of a religion. There was apparently no reason why she should have lacked that support: she had always been made to practise the duties of religion: her mother practised them regularly. But that was just the difficulty: her mother practised them, but her Aunt Marthe did not. And how was she to avoid comparison? The eyes of a child are susceptible to many untruths, to which her elders never give a thought, and children notice many weaknesses and contradictions. Jacqueline noticed that her mother and those who said that they believed had as much fear of death as though there had been no faith in them. No: religion was not a strong enough support. . . . And in addition there were certain

personal experiences, feelings of revolt and disgust, a tactless confessor who had hurt her. . . . She went on practising, but without faith, just as she paid calls, because she had been well brought up. Religion, like the world, seemed to her to be utterly empty. Her only stay was the memory of the dead woman, in which she was wrapped up. She had many grounds for self-reproach in her treatment of her aunt, whom in her childish selfishness she had often neglected, while now she called to her in vain. She idealized her image: and the great example which Marthe had left upon her mind of a profound life of meditation helped to fill her with distaste for the life of the world, in which there was no truth or serious purpose. She saw nothing but its hypocrisy, and those amiable compromises, which at any other time would have amused her, now revolted her. She was in a condition of moral hypersensitiveness, and everything hurt her: her conscience was raw. Her eyes were opened to certain facts which hitherto had escaped her in her heedlessness.

One afternoon she was in the drawing-room with her mother. Madame Langeais was receiving a caller,—a fashionable painter, a good-looking, pompous man, who was often at the house, but not on terms of intimacy. Jacqueline had a feeling that she was in the way, but that only made her more determined to stay. Madame Langeais was not very well; she had a headache, which made her a little dull, or perhaps it was one of those headache preventives which the ladies of to-day eat like sweets, so that they have the result of completely emptying their pretty heads, and she was not very guarded in what she said. In the course of the conversation she thoughtlessly called her visitor:

"My dear . . ."

She noticed the slip at once. He did not flinch any more than she, and they went on talking politely. Jacqueline, who was pouring out tea, was so amazed that she almost dropped a cup. She had a feeling that they were exchanging a meaning smile behind her back. She turned and intercepted their privy looks, which were immediately disguised.—The discovery upset her completely. Though she had been brought up with the utmost freedom, and had often heard and herself laughed and

talked about such intrigues, it hurt her so that she could hardly bear it when she saw that her mother . . . Her mother: no, it was not the same thing! . . . With her habitual exaggeration she rushed from one extreme to the other. Till then she had suspected nothing. Thereafter she suspected everything. Implacably she read new meanings into this and that detail of her mother's behavior in the past. And no doubt Madame Langeais's frivolity furnished only too many grounds for her suppositions: but Jacqueline added to them. She longed to be more intimate with her father, who had always been nearer to her, his quality of mind having a great attraction for her. She longed to love him more, and to pity him. But Langeais did not seem to stand in much need of pity: and a suspicion, more dreadful even than the first, crossed the girl's heated imagination,—that her father knew nothing, but that it suited him to know nothing, and that, so long as he were allowed to go his own way, he did not care.

Then Jacqueline felt that she was lost. She dared not despise them. She loved them. But she could not go on living in their house. Her friendship with Simone Adam was no help at all. She judged severely the foibles of her former boon companion. She did not spare herself: everything that was ugly and mediocre in herself made her suffer terribly: she clung desperately to the pure memory of Marthe. But that memory was fading: she felt that the stream of time, one day following another, would cover it up and wash away all trace of it. And then there would be an end of everything: she would be like the rest, sunk deep in the mire. . . . Oh! if she could only escape from such a world, at any cost! Save me! Save me! . . .

It was just when she was in this fever of despair, feeling her utter destitution, filled with passionate disgust and mystic expectancy, holding out her arms to an unknown saviour, that she met Olivier.

Madame Langeais, of course, invited Christophe, who, that winter, was the musician of the hour. Christophe accepted, and, as usual, did not take any trouble to make himself pleasant. However, Madame Langeais thought him charming:—he could

do anything he liked, as long as he was the fashion: everybody would go on thinking him charming, while the fashion ran its allotted course of a few months.—Jacqueline, who, for the time being, was outside the current, was not so charmed with him: the mere fact that Christophe was belauded by certain people was enough to make her diffident about him. Besides, Christophe's bluntness, and his loud way of speaking, and his noisy gaiety, offended her. In her then state of mind the joy of living seemed a coarse thing to her: her eyes were fixed on the twilight melancholy of the soul, and she fancied that she loved it. There was too much sunlight in Christophe.

But when she talked to him he told her about Olivier: he always had to bring his friend into every pleasant thing that happened to him: it would have seemed to him a selfish use of a new friendship if he had not set aside a part of it for Olivier. He told Jacqueline so much about him, that she felt a secret emotion in thus catching a glimpse of a soul so much in accordance with her ideas, and made her mother invite him too. Olivier did not accept at first, so that Christophe and Jacqueline were left to complete their imaginary portrait of him at their leisure, and, of course, he was found to be very like it when at last he made up his mind to go.

He went, but hardly spoke a word. He did not need to speak. His intelligent eyes, his smile, his refined manners, the tranquillity that was in and inundated by his personality, could not but attract Jacqueline. Christophe, by contrast, stood as a foil to Olivier's shining qualities. She did not show anything, for she was fearful of the feeling stirring in her: she confined herself to talking to Christophe, but it was always about Olivier. Christophe was only too happy to talk about his friend, and did not notice Jacqueline's pleasure in the subject of their conversation. He used to talk about himself, and she would listen agreeably enough, though she was not in the least interested: then, without seeming to do so, she would bring the conversation round to those episodes in his life which included Olivier.

Jacqueline's pretty ways were dangerous for a man who was not on his guard. Without knowing it Christophe fell in love with her: it gave him pleasure to go to the house again:

he took pains with his dress: and a feeling, which he well knew, began to tinge all his ideas with its tender smiling languor. Olivier was in love with her too, and had been from their first meeting: he thought she had no regard for him, and suffered in silence. Christophe made his state even worse by telling him joyously, as they left the Langeais' house, what he had said to Jacqueline and what she had said to him. The idea never occurred to Olivier that Jacqueline should like him. Although, by dint of living with Christophe, he had become more optimistic, he still distrusted himself: he could not believe that any woman would ever love him, for he saw himself too clearly, and with eyes that saw too truthfully:—what man is there would be worthy to be loved, if it were for his merits, and not by the magic and indulgence of love?

One evening when he had been invited to the Langeais', he felt that it would make him too unhappy to feel Jacqueline's indifference: he said that he was too tired and told Christophe to go without him. Christophe suspected nothing, and went off in high delight. In his naïve egoism he thought only of the pleasure of having Jacqueline all to himself. He was not suffered to rejoice for long. When she heard that Olivier was not coming, Jacqueline at once became peevish, irritable, bored, and dispirited: she lost all desire to please: she did not listen to Christophe, and answered him at random: and he had the humiliation of seeing her stifle a weary yawn. She was near tears. Suddenly she went away in the middle of the evening, and did not appear again.

Christophe went home discomfited. All the way home he tried to explain this sudden change of front: and the truth began dimly to dawn on him. When he reached his rooms he found Olivier waiting for him, and then, with a would-be indifferent air, Olivier asked him about the party. Christophe told him of his discomfiture, and he saw Olivier's face brighten as he went on.

"Still tired?" he asked. "Why didn't you go to bed?"

"Oh! I'm much better," said Olivier. "I'm not the least tired now."

"Yes," said Christophe slyly, "I fancy it has done you a lot of good not going."

He looked at him affectionately and roguishly, and went away into his own room: and then, when he was alone, he began to laugh quietly, and laughed until he cried:

"Little minx!" he thought. "She was making a game of me! And he was deceiving me, too. What a secret they made of it!"

From that moment he plucked out every personal thought of Jacqueline from his heart: and, like a broody hen hatching her eggs, he hatched the romance of the young lovers. Without seeming to know their secret, and without betraying either to the other, he helped them, though they never knew it.

He thought it his solemn duty to study Jacqueline's character to see if Olivier could be happy with her. And, being very tactless, he horrified Jacqueline with the ridiculous questions he put to her about her tastes, her morality, etc., etc.

"Idiot! What does he mean?" Jacqueline would think angrily, and refuse to answer him, and turn her back on him.

And Olivier would be delighted to see Jacqueline paying no more attention to Christophe. And Christophe would be overjoyed at seeing Olivier's happiness. His joy was patent, and revealed itself much more obstreperously than Olivier's. And as Jacqueline could not explain it, and never dreamed that Christophe had a much clearer knowledge of their love than she had herself, she thought him unbearable: she could not understand how Olivier could be so infatuated with such a vulgar, cumbersome friend. Christophe divined her thoughts, and took a malicious delight in infuriating her: then he would step aside, and say that he was too busy to accept the Langeais' invitations, so as to leave Jacqueline and Olivier alone together.

However, he was not altogether without anxiety concerning the future. He regarded himself as responsible in a large measure for the marriage that was in the making, and he worried over it, for he had a fair insight into Jacqueline's character, and he was afraid of many things: her wealth first of all, her up-bringing, her surroundings, and, above all, her weakness. He remembered his old friend Colette, though, no doubt, he admitted that Jacqueline was truer, more frank, more passionate: there was in the girl an ardent aspiration towards a life of courage, an almost heroic desire for it.

"But desiring isn't everything," thought Christophe, remembering a jest of Diderot's: "the chief thing is a straight backbone."

He would have liked to warn Olivier of the danger. But when he saw him come back from being with Jacqueline, with his eyes lit with joy, he had not the heart to speak, and he thought:

"The poor things are happy. I won't disturb their happiness."

Gradually his affection for Olivier made him share his friend's confidence. He took heart of grace, and at last began to believe that Jacqueline was just as Olivier saw her and as she wished to appear in her own eyes. She meant so well! She loved Olivier for all the qualities which made him different from herself and the world she lived in: because he was poor, because he was uncompromising in his moral ideas, because he was awkward and shy in society. Her love was so pure and so whole that she longed to be poor too, and, sometimes, almost . . . yes, almost to be ugly, so that she might be sure that he loved her for herself, and for the love with which her heart was so full, the love for which her heart was so hungry. . . . Ah! Sometimes, when he was not with her, she would go pale and her hands would tremble. She would seem to scoff at her emotion, and pretend to be thinking of something else, and to take no notice of it. She would talk mockingly of things. But suddenly she would break off, and rush away and shut herself up in her room: and then, with the doors locked, and the curtains drawn over the window, she would sit there, with her knees tight together, and her elbows close against her sides, and her arms folded across her breast, while she tried to repress the beating of her heart: she would sit there huddled together, never stirring, hardly breathing: she dared not move for fear lest her happiness should escape if she so much as lifted a finger. She would sit holding her love close, close to her body in silence.

And now Christophe was absolutely determined that Olivier should succeed in his wooing. He fussed round him like a mother, supervised his dressing, presumed to give him advice as to what he should wear, and even—(think of it!)—tied his tie for him. Olivier bore with him patiently at the cost of

having to retie his tie on the stairs when Christophe was no longer present. He smiled inwardly, but he was touched by such great affection. Besides, his love had made him timid, and he was not sure of himself, and was glad of Christophe's advice. He used to tell him everything that happened when he was with Jacqueline, and Christophe would be just as moved by it as himself, and sometimes at night he would lie awake for hours trying to find the means of making the path of love smoother for his friend.

It was in the garden of the Langeais' villa, near Paris, on the outskirts of the forest of Isle-Adam, that Olivier and Jacqueline had the interview which was the turning-point in their lives.

Christophe had gone down with his friend, but he had found a harmonium in the house, and sat playing so as to leave the lovers to walk about the garden in peace.—Truth to tell, they did not wish it. They were afraid to be left alone. Jacqueline was silent and rather hostile. On his last visit Olivier had been conscious of a change in her manner, a sudden coldness, an expression in her eyes which was strange, hard, and almost inimical. It froze him. He dared not ask her for an explanation, for he was fearful of hearing cruel words on the lips of the girl he loved. He trembled whenever he saw Christophe leave them, for it seemed to him that his presence was his only safeguard against the blow which threatened to fall upon him.

It was not that Jacqueline loved Olivier less. Rather she was more in love with him, and it was that that made her hostile. Love, with which till then she had only played, love, to which she had so often called, was there, before her eyes: she saw it gaping before her like an abyss, and she flung back in terror: she could not understand it, and wondered:

"Why? Why? What does it mean?"

Then she would look at Olivier with the expression which so hurt him, and think:

"Who is this man?"

And she could not tell. He was a stranger.

"Why do I love him?"

She could not tell.

"Do I love him?"

She could not tell. . . . She did not know: and yet she knew that she was caught: she was in the toils of love: she was on the point of losing herself in love, losing herself utterly; her will, her independence, her egoism, her dreams of the future, all were to be swallowed up by the monster. And she would harden herself in anger, and sometimes she would feel that she almost hated Olivier.

They went to the very end of the garden, into the kitchen-garden, which was cut off from the lawns by a hedge of tall trees. They sauntered down the paths bordered on either side with gooseberry bushes, with their clusters of red and golden fruit, and beds of strawberries, the fragrance of which scented the air. It was June: but there had been storms, and the weather was cold. The sky was gray and the light dim: the low-hanging clouds moved in a heavy mass, drifting with the wind, which blew only in the higher air, and never touched the earth; no leaf stirred: but the air was very fresh. Everything was shrouded in melancholy, even their hearts, swelling with the grave happiness that was in them. And from the other end of the garden, through the open windows of the villa, out of sight, there came the sound of the harmonium, grinding out the Fugue in E Flat Minor of Johann Sebastian Bach. They sat down on the coping of a well, both pale and silent. And Olivier saw tears trickling down Jacqueline's cheeks.

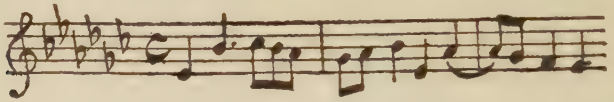
"You are crying?" he murmured, with trembling lips.

And the tears came to his own eyes.

He took her hand. She laid her head on Olivier's shoulder. She gave up the struggle: she was vanquished, and it was such sweet comfort to her! . . . They wept silently as they sat listening to the music under the moving canopy of the heavy clouds, which in their noiseless flight seemed to skim the tops of the trees. They thought of all that they had suffered, and perhaps—who knows?—of all that they were to suffer in the future. There are moments when music summons forth all the sadness woven into the woof of a human being's destiny. . . .

After a moment or two Jacqueline dried her eyes and looked

at Olivier. And suddenly they kissed. O boundless happiness! Religious happiness! So sweet and so profound that it is almost sorrow!



Jacqueline asked:

"Was your sister like you?"

Olivier felt a sudden pang. He said:

"Why do you ask me about her? Did you know her?"

She replied:

"Christophe told me. . . . You have suffered?"

Olivier nodded: he was too much moved to speak.

"I have suffered too," she said.

She told him of the friend who had been taken from her, her beloved Marthe: and with her heart big with emotion she told him how she had wept, wept until she thought she was going to die.

"You will help me?" she said, in a beseeching tone. "You will help me to live, and be good, and to be a little like her? Poor Marthe: you will love her too?"

"We will love them both, as they both love each other."

"I wish they were here."

"They are here."

They sat there locked in each other's arms: they hardly breathed, and could feel heart beating to heart. A gentle drizzle was falling, falling. Jacqueline shivered.

"Let us go in," she said.

Under the trees it was almost dark. Olivier kissed Jacqueline's wet hair: she turned her face up to him, and, for the first time, he felt loving lips against his, a girl's lips, warm and parted a little. They were nigh swooning.

Near the house they stopped once more:

"How utterly alone we were!" he said.

He had already forgotten Christophe.

They remembered him at length. The music had stopped. They went in. Christophe was sitting at the harmonium with his head in his hands, dreaming, he too, of many things in the

past. When he heard the door open, he started from his dream, and turned to them affectionately with a solemn, tender smile lighting up his face. He saw in their eyes what had happened, pressed their hands warmly, and said:

"Sit down, and I'll play you something."

They sat down, and he played the piano, telling in music all that was in his heart, and the great love he had for them. When he had done they all three sat in silence. Then he got up and looked at them. He looked so kind, and so much older, so much stronger than they! For the first time she began to appreciate what he was. He hugged them both, and said to Jacqueline:

"You will love him dearly, won't you? You will love him dearly?"

They were filled with gratitude towards him. But at once he turned the conversation, laughed, went to the window, and sprang out into the garden.

During the days following he kept urging Olivier to go and propose his suit to Jacqueline's parents. Olivier dared not, dreading the refusal which he anticipated. Christophe also insisted on his setting about finding work, for even supposing the Langeais accepted him, he could not take Jacqueline's fortune unless he were himself in a position to earn his living. Olivier was of the same opinion, though he did not share his violent and rather comic distrust of wealthy marriages. It was a rooted idea in Christophe's mind that riches are death to the soul. It was on the tip of his tongue to quote the saying of a wise beggar to a rich lady who was worried in her mind about the next life:

"What, madame, you have millions, and you want to have an immortal soul into the bargain?"

"Beware of women," he would say to Olivier—half in jest, half in earnest—"beware of women, but be twenty times more wary of rich women. Women love art, perhaps, but they strangle the artist. Rich women poison both art and artists. Wealth is a disease. And women are more susceptible to it than men. Every rich man is an abnormal being. . . . You laugh? You don't take me seriously? Look you: does a rich man know

what life is? Does he keep himself in touch with the raw realities of life? Does he feel on his face the stinging breath of poverty, the smell of the bread that he must earn, of the earth that he must dig? Can he understand, does he even see people and things as they are? . . . When I was a little boy I was once or twice taken for a drive in the Grand Duke's landau. We drove through fields in which I knew every blade of grass, through woods that I adored, where I used to run wild all by myself. Well: I saw nothing at all. The whole country had become as stiff and starched as the idiots with whom I was driving. Between the fields and my heart there was not only the curtain of the souls of those formal people. The wooden planks beneath my feet, the moving platform being rolled over the face of Nature, were quite enough. To feel that the earth is my mother, I must have my feet firmly planted on her womb, like a newborn child issuing to the light. Wealth severs the tie which binds men to the earth, and holds the sons of the earth together. And then how can you expect to be an artist? The artist is the voice of the earth. A rich man cannot be a great artist. He would need a thousand times more genius to be so under such unfavorable conditions. Even if he succeeds his art must be a hot-house fruit. The great Goethe struggled in vain: parts of his soul were atrophied, he lacked certain of the vital organs, which were killed by his wealth. You have nothing like the vitality of a Goethe, and you would be destroyed by wealth, especially by a rich woman, a fate which Goethe did at least avoid. Only the man can withstand the scourge. He has in him such native brutality, such a rich deposit of rude, healthy instincts binding him to the earth, that he alone has any chance of escape. But the woman is tainted by the poison, and she communicates the taint to others. She acquires a taste for the reeking scent of wealth, and cannot do without it. A woman who can be rich and yet remain sound in heart is a prodigy as rare as a millionaire who has genius. . . . And I don't like monsters. Any one who has more than enough to live on is a monster—a human cancer preying upon the lives of the rest of humanity."

Olivier laughed:

"What do you want?" he said. "I can't stop loving Jacque-

line because she is not poor, or force her to become poor for love of me."

"Well, if you can't save her, at least save yourself. That's the best way of saving her. Keep yourself pure. Work."

Olivier did not need to go to Christophe for scruples. He was even more nicely sensitive than he in such matters. Not that he took Christophe's diatribes against money seriously: he had been rich himself, and did not loathe riches, and thought them a very good setting for Jacqueline's pretty face. But it was intolerable to think that his love might in any way be contaminated with an imputation of interest. He applied to have his name restored to the University list. For the time being he could not hope for anything better than a moderate post in a provincial school. It was a poor wedding-present to give to Jacqueline. He told her about it timidly. Jacqueline found it difficult at first to see his point of view: she attributed it to an excessive pride, put into his head by Christophe, and she thought it ridiculous: was it not more natural between lovers to set no store by riches or poverty, and was it not rather shabby to refuse to be indebted to her when it would give her such great joy? . . . However, she threw herself in with Olivier's plans: their austerity and discomfort were the very things that brought her round, for she found in them an opportunity of gratifying her desire for moral heroism. In her condition of proud revolt against her surroundings which had been induced by the death of her aunt, and was exalted by her love, she had gone so far as to deny every element in her nature which was in contradiction to her mystic ardor: in all sincerity her whole being was strained, like a bow, after an ideal of a pure and difficult life, radiant with happiness. . . . The obstacles, the very smallness and dullness of her future condition in life, were a joy to her. How good and beautiful it would all be! . . .

Madame Langeais was too much taken up with herself to pay much attention to what was going on about her. For some time past she had been thinking of little outside her health: she spent her whole time in treating imaginary illnesses, and trying one doctor after another: each of them in turn was her saviour, and went on enjoying that position for a fortnight: then it was another's turn. She would stay away from home

for months in expensive sanatoria, where she religiously carried out all sorts of preposterous prescriptions to the letter. She had forgotten her husband and daughter.

M. Langeais was not so indifferent, and had begun to suspect the existence of the affair. His paternal jealousy made him feel it. He had for Jacqueline that strange pure affection which many fathers feel for their daughters, an elusive, indefinable feeling, a mysterious, voluptuous, and almost sacred curiosity, in living once more in the lives of fellow-creatures who are of their blood, who are themselves, and are women. In such secrets of the heart there are many lights and shadows which it is healthier to ignore. Hitherto it had amused him to see his daughter making calfish young men fall in love with her: he loved her so, romantic, coquettish, and discreet—(just as he was himself).—But when he saw that this affair threatened to become more serious, he grew anxious. He began by making fun of Olivier to Jacqueline, and then he criticised him with a certain amount of bitterness. Jacqueline laughed at first, and said:

"Don't say such hard things, father: you would find it awkward later on, supposing I wanted to marry him."

M. Langeais protested loudly, and said she was mad: with the result that she lost her head completely. He declared that he would never let her marry Olivier. She vowed that she would marry him. The veil was rent. He saw that he was nothing to her. In his fatherly egoism it had never occurred to him, and he was angry. He swore that neither Olivier nor Christophe should ever set foot inside his house again. Jacqueline lost her temper, and one fine morning Olivier opened the door to admit a young woman, pale and determined looking, who rushed in like a whirlwind, and said:

"Take me away with you! My father and mother won't hear of it. I *will* marry you. You must compromise me."

Olivier was alarmed though touched by it, and did not even try to argue with her. Fortunately Christophe was there. Ordinarily he was the least reasonable of men, but now he reasoned with them. He pointed out what a scandal there would be, and how they would suffer for it. Jacqueline bit her lip angrily, and said:

"Very well. We will kill ourselves."

So far from frightening Olivier, her threat only helped to make up his mind to side with her. Christophe had no small difficulty in making the crazy pair have a little patience: before taking such desperate measures they might as well try others: let Jacqueline go home, and he would go and see M. Langeais and plead their cause.

A queer advocate! M. Langeais nearly kicked him out on the first words he said: but then the absurdity of the situation struck him, and it amused him. Little by little the gravity of his visitor and his expression of honesty and absolute sincerity began to make an impression: however, he would not fall in with his contentions, and went on firing ironical remarks at him. Christophe pretended not to hear: but every now and then as a more than usually biting shaft struck home he would stop and draw himself up in silence; then he would go on again. Once he brought his fist down on the table with a thud, and said:

"I beg of you to believe that it has given me no pleasure to call on you: I have to control myself to keep from retaliating on you for certain things you have said: but I think it my duty to speak to you, and I am doing so. Forget me, as I forget myself, and weigh well what I am telling you."

M. Langeais listened: and when he heard of the project of suicide, he shrugged his shoulders and pretended to laugh: but he was shaken. He was too clever to take such a threat as a joke: he knew that he had to deal with the insanity of a girl in love. One of his mistresses, a gay, gentle creature, whom he had thought incapable of putting her boastful threat into practice, had shot herself with a revolver before his eyes: she did not kill herself at once, but the scene lived in his memory. . . . No, one can never be sure with women. He felt a pang at his heart. . . . "She wishes it? Very well: so be it, and so much the worse for her, little fool! . . ." He would have granted anything rather than drive his daughter to extremes. In truth he might have used diplomacy, and pretended to give his consent to gain time, gently to wean Jacqueline from Olivier. But doing so meant giving himself more trouble than he could or would be bothered with. Besides, he was weak: and the mere fact that he had angrily said "No!"

to Jacqueline, now inclined him to say "Yes." After all, what does one know of life? Perhaps the child was right. The great thing was that they should love each other. M. Langeais knew quite well that Olivier was a serious young man, and perhaps had talent. . . . He gave his consent.

The day before the marriage the two friends sat up together into the small hours. They did not wish to lose the last hours of their dear life together.—But already it was in the past. It was like those sad farewells on the station platform when there is a long wait before the train moves: one insists on staying, and looking and talking. But one's heart is not in it: one's friend has already gone. . . . Christophe tried to talk. He stopped in the middle of a sentence, seeing the absent look in Olivier's eyes, and he said, with a smile:

"You are so far away!"

Olivier was confused and begged his pardon. It made him sad to realize that his thoughts were wandering during the last intimate moments with his friend. But Christophe pressed his hand, and said:

"Come, don't constrain yourself. I am happy. Go on dreaming, my boy."

They stayed by the window, leaning out side by side, and looking through the darkness down into the garden. After some time Christophe said to Olivier:

"You are running away from me. You think you can escape me? You are thinking of your Jacqueline. But I shall catch you up. I, too, am thinking of her."

"Poor old fellow," said Olivier, "and I was thinking of you! And even . . ."

He stopped.

Christophe laughed and finished the sentence for him.

". . . And even taking a lot of trouble over it! . . ."

Christophe turned out very fine, almost smart, for the wedding. There was no religious ceremony: neither the indifferent Olivier nor the rebellious Jacqueline had wished it. Christophe had written a symphonic fragment for the ceremony at the *mairie*, but at the last moment he gave up the idea when he

realized what a civil marriage is: he thought such ceremonies absurd. People need to have lost both faith and liberty before they can have any belief in them. When a true Catholic takes the trouble to become a free-thinker he is not likely to endow a functionary of the civil State with a religious character. Between God and his own conscience there is no room for a State religion. The State registers, it does not bind man and wife together.

The marriage of Olivier and Jacqueline was not likely to make Christophe regret his decision. Olivier listened with a faintly ironical air of aloofness to the Mayor ponderously fawning upon the young couple, and the wealthy relations, and the witnesses who wore decorations. Jacqueline did not listen: and she furtively put out her tongue at Simone Adam, who was watching her: she had made a bet with her that being "married" would not affect her in the least, and it looked as though she would win it: it hardly seemed to occur to her that it was she who was being married: the idea of it tickled her. The rest were posing for the onlookers: and the onlookers were taking them all in. M. Langeais was showing off: in spite of his sincere affection for his daughter, he was chiefly occupied in taking stock of the guests to find out whether he had left any gaps in his list of invitations. Only Christophe was moved: not one of the rest, relations, bride, and bridegroom, or the Mayor officiating, showed any emotion: he stood gazing hungrily at Olivier, who did not look at him.

In the evening the young couple left for Italy. Christophe and M. Langeais went with them to the station. They seemed happy, not at all sorry to be going, and did not conceal their impatience for the train to move. Olivier looked like a boy, and Jacqueline like a little girl. . . . What a tender, melancholy charm is in such partings! The father is a little sad to see his child taken away by a stranger, and for what! . . . and to see her go away from him forever. But they feel nothing but a new intoxicating sense of liberty. There are no more hindrances to life: nothing can stop them ever again: they seem to have reached the very summit: now might they die readily, for they have everything, and nothing to fear. . . . But soon they see that it was no more than a stage in the journey. The

road still lies before them, and winds round the mountain: and there are very few who reach the second stage. . . .

The train bore them away into the night. Christophe and M. Langeais went home together. Christophe said with naïve archness:

"Now we are both widowed!"

M. Langeais began to laugh. He liked Christophe now that he knew him better. They said good-by, and went their ways. They were both unhappy, with an odd mixture of sadness and sweetness. Sitting alone in his room Christophe thought:

"The best of my soul is happy."

Nothing had been altered in Olivier's room. They had arranged that until Olivier returned and settled in a new house his furniture and belongings should stay with Christophe. It was as though he himself was still present. Christophe looked at the portrait of Antoinette, placed it on his desk, and said to it:

"My dear, are you glad?"

He wrote often—rather too often—to Olivier. He had a few vaguely written letters, which were increasingly distant in tone. He was disappointed, but not much affected by it. He persuaded himself that it must be so, and he had no anxiety as to the future of their friendship.

His solitude did not trouble him. Far from it: he did not have enough of it to suit his taste. He was beginning to suffer from the patronage of the *Grand Journal*. Arsène Gamache had a tendency to believe that he had proprietary rights in the famous men whom he had taken the trouble to discover: he took it as a matter of course that their fame should be associated with his own, much as Louis XIV. grouped Molière, Le Brun, and Lulli about his throne. Christophe discovered that the author of the *Hymn to Ægis* was not more imperial or more of a nuisance to art than his patron of the *Grand Journal*. For the journalist, who knew no more about art than the Emperor, had opinions no less decided about it: he could not tolerate the existence of anything he did not like: he decreed that it was bad and pernicious: and he would ruin it in the public interest. It is both comic and terrible to see such coarse-grained uncul-

tivated men of affairs presuming to control not only politics and money, but also the mind, and offering it a kennel with a collar and a dish of food, or, if it refuses, having the power to let loose against it thousands of idiots whom they have trained into a docile pack of hounds!—Christophe was not the sort of man to let himself be schooled and disciplined. It seemed to him a very bad thing that an ignoramus should take upon himself to tell him what he ought and ought not to do in music: and he gave him to understand that art needed a much more severe training than politics. Also, without any sort of polite circumlocution, he declined a proposal that he should set to music a libretto, which the author, a leading member of the staff of the paper, was trying to place, while it was highly recommended by his chief. It had the effect of cooling his relations with Gamache.

Christophe did not mind that in the least. Though he had so lately risen from his obscurity, he was longing to return to it. He found himself "exposed to that great light in which a man is lost among the many." There were too many people bothering their heads about him. He pondered these words of Goethe:

"When a writer has attracted attention by a good piece of work, the public tries to prevent his producing another. . . . The brooding talent is dragged out into the hurly-burly of the world, in spite of itself, because every one thinks he will be able to appropriate a part of it."

He shut his door upon the outside world, and began to seek the company of some of his old friends in his own house. He revisited the Arnauds, whom he had somewhat neglected. Madame Arnaud, who was left alone for part of the day, had time to think of the sorrows of others. She thought how empty Christophe's life must be now that Olivier was gone: and she overcame her shyness so far as to invite him to dinner. If she had dared, she would even have offered to go in from time to time and tidy his rooms: but she was not bold enough: and no doubt it was better so: for Christophe did not like to have people worrying about him. But he accepted the invitation to dinner, and made a habit of going in to the Arnauds' every evening.

He found them just as united, living in the same atmosphere of rather sad, sorrowful tenderness, though it was even graver than before. Arnaud was passing through a period of depression, brought on by the wear and tear of his life as a teacher,—a life of exhausting labor, in which one day is like unto another, and each day's work is like that of the next, like a wheel turning in one place, without ever stopping, or ever advancing. Though he was very patient, the good man was passing through a crisis of discouragement. He let certain acts of injustice prey upon him, and was inclined to think that all his zeal was futile. Madame Arnaud would comfort him with kind words: she seemed to be just as calm and peaceful as in the old days: but her face was thinner. In her presence Christophe would congratulate Arnaud on having such a sensible wife.

"Yes," Arnaud would say, "she is a good little creature; nothing ever puts her out. She is lucky: so am I. If she had suffered in this cursed life, I don't see how I could have got through."

Madame Arnaud would blush and say nothing. Then in her even tones she would talk of something else.—Christophe's visits had their usual good effect: they brought light in their train: and he, for his part, found it very pleasant to feel the warmth of their kind, honest hearts.

Another friend, a girl, came into his life. Or rather he sought her out: for though she longed to know him, she could not have made the effort to go and see him. She was a young woman of a little more than twenty-five, a musician, and she had taken the first prize at the Conservatoire: her name was Cécile Fleury. She was short and rather thick-set. She had heavy eyebrows, fine, large eyes, with a soft expression, a short, broad, turned-up nose, inclined to redness, like a duck's beak, thick lips, kind and tender, an energetic chin, heavy and solid, and her forehead was broad, but not high. Her hair was done up in a large bun at the back of her neck. She had strong arms and a pianist's hands, very long, with a splayed thumb and square finger-tips. The general impression she gave was one of a rather sluggish vitality and of rude rustic health. She lived with her mother, who was very dear to her: a good, kind woman, who took not the smallest interest in music, though she used to talk about

it, because she was always hearing about it, and knew everything that happened in Musicopolis. She had a dull, even life, gave lessons all day long, and sometimes concerts, of which nobody took any notice. She used to go home late at night, on foot or in an omnibus, worn out, but quite good-tempered: and she used to practise her scales bravely and trim her own hats, talking a great deal, laughing readily, and often singing for nothing.

She had not been spoiled by life. She knew the value of a little comfort when she had earned it by her own efforts,—the joy of a little pleasure, or a little scarcely perceptible advance in her position or her work. Indeed, if one month she could only earn five francs more than in the last, or if she could at length manage to play a certain passage of Chopin which she had been struggling with for weeks,—she would be quite happy. Her work, which was not excessive, exactly fitted her aptitude for it, and gave her a healthy satisfaction. Playing, singing, giving lessons gave her a pleasant feeling of satisfied activity, normal and regular, and at the same time a modest competence and a comfortable placid success. She had a healthy appetite, ate much, slept well, and was never ill.

She was clear-headed, sensible, modest, perfectly balanced, and never worried about anything: for she always lived in and for the present, without bothering her head about what had happened or what was going to happen in the future. And as she was always well, and as her life was comparatively secure from the sudden turns of fate, she was almost always satisfied. She took the same pleasure in practising her piano as in keeping house, or talking about things domestic, or doing nothing. She had the art of living, not from day to day—(she was economical and provident)—but from minute to minute. She was not possessed of any sort of idealism: the only ideal she had, if it could be called so, was bourgeois, and was unostentatiously expressed in her every action, and evenly distributed through every moment of the day: it consisted in peacefully loving everything she was doing, whatever it might be. She went to church on Sundays: but the feeling of religion had practically no place in her life. She admired enthusiasts, like Christophe, who had faith or genius: but she did not envy them: what could she have done with their uneasiness and their genius?

How came it, then, that she could feel their music? She would have found it hard to say. But it was very certain that she did feel it. She was superior to other virtuosi by reason of her sturdy quality of balance, physical and moral: in her abounding vitality, in the absence of personal passion, the passions of others found a rich soil in which to come to flower. She was not touched by them. She could translate in all their energy the terrible passions which had consumed the artist without being tainted by their poison: she only felt their force and the great weariness that came after its expression. When it was over, she would be all in a sweat, utterly exhausted: she would smile calmly and feel very happy.

Christophe heard her one evening, and was struck by her playing. He went and shook hands with her after the concert. She was grateful to him for it: there were very few people at the concert, and she was not so used to compliments as to take no delight in them. As she had never been clever enough to throw in her lot with any musical coterie, or cunning enough to surround herself with a group of worshipers, and as she never attempted to make herself particular, either by technical mannerisms or by a fantastic interpretation of the hallowed compositions, or by assuming an exclusive right to play some particular master, such as Johann Sebastian Bach, or Beethoven, and as she had no theories about what she played, but contented herself with playing simply what she felt—nobody paid any attention to her, and the critics ignored her: for nobody told them that she played well, and they were not likely to find it out for themselves.

Christophe saw a good deal of Cécile. Her strength and tranquillity attracted him as a mystery. She was vigorous and apathetic. In his indignation at her not being better known he proposed that he should get his friends of the *Grand Journal* to write about her. But although she would have liked to be praised, she begged him not to do anything to procure it. She did not want to have the struggle or the bother or the jealousies it would entail: she wanted to be left in peace. She was not talked about: so much the better! She was not envious, and she was the first to be enthusiastic about the technique of other virtuosi. She had no ambition, and no desire for anything.

She was much too lazy in mind! When she had not any immediate and definite work to do, she did nothing, nothing; she did not even dream, not even at night, in bed: she either slept or thought of nothing. She had not the morbid preoccupation with marriage, which poisons the lives of girls who shiver at the thought of dying old maids. When she was asked if she would not like to have a husband, she would say:

"Why not throw in fifty thousand a year? One has to take what comes. If any one offers, so much the better! If not, one goes without. Because one can't have cake, I don't see why one shouldn't be glad of honest bread. Especially when one has had to eat stale bread for so long!"

"Besides," her mother would say, "there are plenty of people who never get any bread to eat at all!"

Cécile had good reason to fight shy of men. Her father, who had been dead some years, was a weak, lazy creature: he had wronged his wife and his family. She had also a brother who had turned out badly and did not know what had become of him: every now and then he would turn up and ask for money: she and her mother were afraid of him and ashamed of him, and fearful of what they might hear about him any day: and yet they loved him. Christophe met him once. He was at Cécile's house: there was a ring at the door: and her mother answered it. He heard a conversation being carried on in the next room, and the voices were raised every now and then. Cécile seemed ill at ease, and went out also, leaving Christophe alone. The discussion went on, and the stranger's voice assumed a threatening tone: Christophe thought it time to intervene, and opened the door. He hardly had time to do more than catch a glimpse of a young and slightly deformed man, whose back was turned towards him, for Cécile rushed towards him and implored him to go back. She went with him, and they sat in silence. In the next room the visitor went on shouting for a few minutes longer, and then took his leave and slammed the door. Then Cécile sighed, and said to Christophe:

"Yes. . . . He is my brother."

Christophe understood:

"Ah!" he said. . . . "I know. . . . I have a brother, too. . . ."

Cécile took his hand with an air of affectionate commiseration: "You too?"

"Yes," he said. . . . "These are the joys of a family."

Cécile laughed, and they changed the conversation. No, the joys of a family had no enchantment for her, nor had the idea of marriage any fascination: men were rather a worthless lot on the whole. Her independent life had many advantages: her mother had often sighed after her liberty: she had no desire to lose it. The only day-dream in which she indulged was that some day—Heaven knows when!—she would not have to give lessons any more, and would be able to live in the country. But she did not even take the trouble to imagine such a life in detail: she found it too fatiguing to think of anything so uncertain: it was better to sleep,—or do her work. . . .

In the meanwhile, in default of her castle in Spain, she used to hire a little house in the outskirts of Paris for the summer, and lived there with her mother. It was twenty minutes' journey by train. The house was some distance away from the station, standing alone in the midst of a stretch of waste lands which were called "fields," and Cécile used often to return late at night. But she was not afraid, and did not believe there was any danger. She had a revolver, but she always used to leave it at home. Besides, it was doubtful if she would have known how to use it.

Sometimes, when he went to see her, Christophe would make her play. It amused him to see her keen perception of the music, especially when he had dropped a hint which put her on the track of a feeling that called for expression. He had discovered that she had an excellent voice, but she had no idea of it. He made her practise it, and would give her old German *lieder* or his own music to sing: it gave her pleasure, and she made such progress as to surprise herself as much as him. She was marvelously gifted. The fire of music had miraculously descended upon this daughter of Parisian middle-class parents who were utterly devoid of any artistic feeling. Philomela—(for so he used to call her)—used sometimes to discuss music with Christophe, but always in a practical, never in a sentimental, way: she seemed only to be interested in the technique of singing and the piano. Generally, when they were together and were

not playing music, they talked of the most commonplace things, and Christophe, who could not for a moment have tolerated such conversations with an ordinary woman, would discuss these subjects as a matter of course with Philomela.

They used to spend whole evenings alone together, and were genuinely fond of each other, though their affection was perfectly calm and even almost cold. One evening, when he had dined with her, and had stayed talking longer than usual, a violent storm came on: she said:

"You can't go now! Stay until to-morrow morning."

He was fitted up with an improvised bed in the little sitting-room. Only a thin partition was between it and Cécile's bedroom, and the doors were not locked. As he lay there he could hear her bed creaking and her soft, regular breathing. In five minutes she was asleep: and very soon he followed her example without either of them having had the faintest shadow of an uneasy thought.

At the same time there came into his life a number of other unknown friends, drawn to him by reading his works. Most of them lived far away from Paris or shut up in their homes, and never met him. Even a vulgar success does a certain amount of good: it makes the artist known to thousands of good people in remote corners whom he could never have reached without the stupid articles in the papers. Christophe entered into correspondence with some of them. There were lonely young men, living a life of hardship, their whole being aspiring to an ideal of which they were not sure, and they came greedily to slake their thirst at the well of Christophe's brotherly spirit. There were humble people in the provinces who read his *lieder* and wrote to him, like old Schulz, and felt themselves one with him. There were poor artists,—a composer among others,—who had not, and could not attain, not only success, but self-expression, and it made them glad to have their ideas realized by Christophe. And dearest of all, perhaps,—there were those who wrote to him without giving their names, and, being thus more free to speak, naïvely laid bare their touching confidence in the elder brother who had come to their assistance. Christophe's heart would grow big at the thought that he would never know these charming people whom it would have given him such joy to

love: he would kiss some of these anonymous letters as the writers of them kissed his *lieder;* and each to himself would think:

"Dear written sheets, what a deal of good you have done me!"

So, according with the unvaried rhythm of the universe, there was formed about him the little family of genius, grouped about him, giving him food and taking it from him, which grows little by little, and in the end becomes one great collective soul, of which he is the central fire, like a gleaming world, a moral planet moving through space, mingling its chorus of brotherhood with the harmony of the spheres.

And as these mysterious links were forged between Christophe and his unseen friends, a revolution took place in his artistic faculty: it became larger and more human. He lost all interest in music which was a monologue, a soliloquy, and even more so in music which was a scientific structure built entirely for the interest of the profession. He wished his music to be an act of communion with other men. There is no vital art save that which is linked with the rest of humanity. Johann Sebastian Bach, even in his darkest hours of isolation, was linked with the rest of humanity by his religious faith, which he expressed in his art. Handel and Mozart, by dint of circumstances, wrote for an audience, and not for themselves. Even Beethoven had to reckon with the multitude. It is salutary. It is good for humanity to remind genius every now and then:

"What is there for us in your art? If there is nothing, out you go!"

In such constraint genius is the first to gain. There are, indeed, great artists who express only themselves. But the greatest of all are those whose hearts beat for all men. If any man would see the living God face to face, he must seek Him, not in the empty firmament of his own brain, but in the love of men.

The artists of that time were far removed from that love. They wrote only for a more or less anarchical and vain group, uprooted from the life of the country, who preened themselves on not sharing the prejudices and passions of the rest of humanity, or else made a mock of them. It is a fine sort of fame that is won by self-amputation from life, so as to be unlike other

men! Let all such artists perish! We will go with the living, be suckled at the breasts of the earth, and drink in all that is most profound and sacred in our people, and all its love from the family and the soil. In the greatest age of liberty, among the people with the most ardent worship of beauty, the young Prince of the Italian Renaissance, Raphael, glorified maternity in his transteverine Madonnas. Who is there now to give us in music a *Madonna à la Chaise?* Who is there to give us music meet for every hour of life? You have nothing, you have nothing in France. When you want to give your people songs, you are reduced to bringing up to date the German masters of the past. In your art, from top to bottom, everything remains to be done, or to be done again. . . .

Christophe corresponded with Olivier, who was now settled in a provincial town. He tried to maintain in correspondence that collaboration which had been so fruitful during the time when they had lived together. He wanted him to write him fine poetic words closely allied with the thoughts and deeds of everyday life, like the poems which are the substance of the old German *lieder.* Short fragments from the Scriptures and the Hindoo poems, and the old Greek philosophers, short religious and moral poems, little pictures of Nature, the emotions of love or family life, the whole poetry of morning, evening, and night, that is in simple, healthy people. Four lines or six are enough for a *lied:* only the simplest expressions, and no elaborate development or subtlety of harmony. What have I to do with your esthetic tricks? Love my life, help me to love it and to live it. Write me the *Hours of France,* my *Great* and *Small Hours.* And let us together find the clearest melody. Let us avoid like the plague any artistic language that belongs to a caste like that of so many writers, and especially of so many French musicians of to-day. We must have the courage to speak like men, and not like "artists." We must draw upon the common fund of all men, and unashamedly make use of old formulæ, upon which the ages have set their seal, formulæ which the ages have filled with their spirit. Look at what our forefathers have done. It was by returning to the musical language of all men that the art of the German classics of the eighteenth century came into being. The melodies of Gluck and the cre-

ators of the symphony are sometimes trivial and commonplace compared with the subtle and erudite phrases of Johann Sebastian Bach and Rameau. It is their raciness of the soil that gives such zest to, and has procured such immense popularity for the German classics. They began with the simplest musical forms, the *lied* and the *Singspiel*, the little flowers of everyday life which impregnated the childhood of men like Mozart and Weber.—Do you do the same. Write songs for all and sundry. Upon that basis you will soon build quartettes and symphonies. What is the good of rushing ahead? The pyramids were not begun at the top. Your symphonies at present are trunkless heads, ideas without any stuffing. Oh, you fair spirits, become incarnate! There must be generations of musicians patiently and joyously and piously living in brotherhood with these people. No musical art was ever built in a day.

Christophe was not content to apply these principles in music: he urged Olivier to set himself at the head of a similar movement in literature:

"The writers of to-day," he said, "waste their energy in describing human rarities, or cases that are common enough in the abnormal groups of men and women living on the fringe of the great society of active, healthy human beings. Since they themselves have shut themselves off from life, leave them and go where there are men. Show the life of every day to the men and women of every day: that life is deeper and more vast than the sea. The smallest among you bears the infinite in his soul. The infinite is in every man who is simple enough to be a man, in the lover, in the friend, in the woman who pays with her pangs for the radiant glory of the day of childbirth, in every man and every woman who lives in obscure self-sacrifice which will never be known to another soul: it is the very river of life, flowing from one to another, from one to another, and back again and round. . . . Write the simple life of one of these simple men, write the peaceful epic of the days and nights following, following one like to another, and yet all different, all sons of the same mother, from the dawning of the first day in the life of the world. Write it simply, as simple as its own unfolding. Waste no thought upon the word, and the letter, and the subtle vain researches in which the force of the artists of

to-day is turned to nought. You are addressing all men: use the language of all men. There are no words noble or vulgar; there is no style chaste or impure: there are only words and styles which say or do not say exactly what they have to say. Be sound and thorough in all you do: think just what you think,—and feel just what you feel. Let the rhythm of your heart prevail in your writings! The style is the soul."

Olivier agreed with Christophe, but he replied rather ironically:

"Such a book would be fine: but it would never reach the people who would care to read it. The critics would strangle it on the way."

"There speaks my little French bourgeois!" replied Christophe. "Worrying his mind about what the critics will or will not think of his work! . . . The critics, my boy, are only there to register victory or defeat. The great thing is to be victor. . . . I have managed to get along without them! You must learn how to disregard them, too. . . ."

But Olivier had learned how to disregard something entirely different! He had turned aside from art, and Christophe, and everybody. At that time he was thinking of nothing but Jacqueline, and Jacqueline was thinking of nothing but him.

The selfishness of their love had cut them off from everything and everybody: they were recklessly destroying all their future resources.

They were in the blind wonder of the first days, when man and woman, joined together, have no thought save that of losing themselves in each other. . . . With every part of themselves, body and soul, they touch and taste and seek to probe into the very inmost depths. They are alone together in a lawless universe, a very chaos of love, when the confused elements know not as yet what distinguishes one from the other, and strive greedily to devour each other. Each in other finds nothing save delight: each in other finds another self. What is the world to them? Like the antique Androgyne slumbering in his dream of voluptuous and harmonious delights, their eyes are closed to the world. All the world is in themselves. . . .

O days, O nights, weaving one web of dreams, hours fleeting like the floating white clouds in the heavens, leaving nought but a shimmering wake in dazzled eyes, the warm wind breathing the languor of spring, the golden warmth of the body, the sunlit arbor of love, shameless chastity, embraces, and madness, and sighs, and happy laughter, happy tears, what is there left of the lovers, thrice happy dust? Hardly, it seems, that their hearts could ever remember to beat: for when they were one then time had ceased to exist.

And all their days are one like unto another. . . . Sweet, sweet dawn. . . . Together, embracing, they issue from the abyss of sleep: they smile and their breath is mingled, their eyes open and meet, and they kiss. . . . There is freshness and youth in the morning hours, a virgin air cooling their fever. . . . There is a sweet languor in the endless day still throbbing with the sweetness of the night. . . . Summer afternoons, dreams in the fields, on the velvety sward, beneath the rustling of the tall white poplars. . . . Dreams in the lovely evenings, when, under the gleaming sky, they return, clasping each other, to the house of their love. The wind whispers in the bushes. In the clear lake of the sky hovers the fleecy light of the silver moon. A star falls and dies,—hearts give a little throb—a world is silently snuffed out. Swift silent shadows pass at rare intervals on the road near by. The bells of the town ring in the morrow's holiday. They stop for a moment, she nestles close to him, they stand so without a word. . . . Ah! if only life could be so forever, as still and silent as that moment! . . . She sighs and says:

"Why do I love you so much? . . ."

After a few weeks' traveling in Italy they had settled in a town in the west of France, where Olivier had gained an appointment. They saw hardly anybody. They took no interest in anything. When they were forced to pay calls, their scandalous indifference was so open that it hurt some, while it made others smile. Anything that was said to them simply made no impression. They had the impertinently solemn manner common to young married people, who seem to say:

"You people don't know anything at all. . . ."

Jacqueline's pretty pouting face, with its absorbed expression, Olivier's happy eyes that looked so far away, said only:

"If you knew how boring we find you! . . . When shall we be left alone?"

Even the presence of others could not embarrass them. It was hard not to see their exchange of glances as they talked. They did not need to look to see each other: and they would smile: for they knew that they were thinking of the same things at the same time. When they were alone once more, after having suffered the constraint of the presence of others, they would shout for joy—indulge in a thousand childish pranks. They would talk baby-language, and find grotesque nicknames for each other. She used to call him Olive, Olivet, Olifant, Fanny, Mami, Mime, Minaud, Quinaud, Kaunitz, Cosima, Cobourg, Panot, Nacot, Ponette, Naquet, and Canot. She would behave like a little girl; but she wanted to be all things at once to him, to give him every kind of love: mother, sister, wife, sweetheart, mistress.

It was not enough for her to share his pleasures: as she had promised herself, she shared his work: and that, too, was a game. At first she brought to bear on it the amused ardor of a woman to whom work is something new: she seemed really to take a pleasure in the most ungrateful tasks, copying in the libraries, and translating dull books: it was part of her plan of life, that it should be pure and serious, and wholly consecrated to noble thoughts and work in common. And all went well as long as the light of love was in them: for she thought only of him, and not of what she was doing. The odd thing was that everything she did in that way was well done. Her mind found no difficulty in taking in abstract ideas, which at any other time of her life she would have found it hard to follow: her whole being was, as it were, uplifted from the earth by love; she did not know it; like a sleep-walker moving easily over roofs, gravely and gaily, without seeing anything at all, she lived on in her dream. . . .

And then she began to see the roofs: but that did not give her any qualms: only she asked what she was doing so high up, and became herself again. Work bored her. She persuaded herself that it stood in the way of her love: no doubt because

her love had already become less ardent. But there was no evidence of that. They could not bear to be out of each other's sight. They shut themselves off from the world, and closed their doors and refused all invitations. They were jealous of the affections of other people, even of their occupations, of everything which distracted them from their love. Olivier's correspondence with Christophe dwindled. Jacqueline did not like it: he was a rival to her, representing a part of Olivier's past life in which she had had no share; and the more room he filled in Olivier's life, the more she sought, instinctively, to rob him of it. Without any deliberate intention, she gradually and steadily alienated Olivier from his friend: she made sarcastic comments on Christophe's manners, his face, his way of writing, his artistic projects: there was no malice in what she said, nor slyness: she was too good-natured for that. Olivier was amused by her remarks, and saw no harm in them: he thought he still loved Christophe as much as ever, but he loved only his personality: and that counts for very little in friendship: he did not see that little by little he was losing his understanding of him, and his interest in his ideas, and the heroic idealism in which they had been so united. . . . Love is too sweet a joy for the heart of youth: compared with it, what other faith can hold its ground? The body of the beloved and the soul that breathes in it are all science and all faith. With what a pitying smile does a lover regard the object of another's adoration and the things which he himself once adored! Of all the might of life and its bitter struggles the lover sees nothing but the passing flower, which he believes must live forever. . . . Love absorbed Olivier. In the beginning his happiness was not so great but it left him with the energy to express it in graceful verse. Then even that seemed vain to him: it was a theft of time from love. And Jacqueline also set to work to destroy their every source of life, to kill the tree of life, without the support of which the ivy of love must die. Thus in their happiness they destroyed each other.

Alas! we so soon grow used to happiness! When selfish happiness is the sole aim of life, life is soon left without an aim. It becomes a habit, a sort of intoxication which we cannot

do without. And how vitally important it is that we should do without it. . . . Happiness is an instant in the universal rhythm, one of the poles between which the pendulum of life swings: to stop the pendulum it must be broken. . . .

They knew the "boredom of well-being which sets the nerves on edge." Their hours of sweetness dragged, drooped, and withered like flowers without water. The sky was still blue for them, but there was no longer the light morning breeze. All was still: Nature was silent. They were alone, as they had desired.—And their hearts sank.

An indefinable feeling of emptiness, a vague weariness not without a certain charm, came over them. They knew not what it was, and they were darkly uneasy. They became morbidly sensitive. Their nerves, strained in the close watching of the silence, trembled like leaves at the least unexpected clash of life. Jacqueline was often in tears without any cause for weeping, and although she tried hard to convince herself of it, it was not only love that made them flow. After the ardent and tormented years that had preceded her marriage the sudden stoppage of her efforts as she attained—attained and passed—her end,—the sudden futility of any new course of action—and perhaps of all that she had done in the past,—flung her into a state of confusion, which she could not understand, so that it appalled and crushed her. She would not allow that it was so: she attributed it to her nerves, and pretended to laugh it off: but her laughter was no less uneasy than her tears. She tried bravely to take up her work again: but as soon as she began she could not understand how she could ever have taken any interest in such stupid things, and she flung them aside in disgust. She made an effort to pick up the threads of her social life once more: but with no better success: she had committed herself, and she had lost the trick of dealing with the commonplace people and their commonplace remarks that are inevitable in life: she thought them grotesque; and she flung back into her isolation with her husband, and tried hard to persuade herself, as a result of these unhappy experiences, that there was nothing good in the world save love. And for a time she seemed really to be more in love than ever.

Olivier, being less passionate and having a greater store of

tenderness, was less susceptible to these apprehensions: only every now and then he would feel a qualm of uneasiness. Besides, his love was preserved in some measure by the constraint of his daily occupation, his work, which was distasteful to him. But as he was highly strung and sensitive, and everything that happened in the heart of the woman he loved affected him also, Jacqueline's secret uneasiness infected him.

One fine afternoon they went for a walk together in the country. They had looked forward to the walk eagerly and happily. All the world was bright and gay about them. But as soon as they set out gloom and heavy sadness descended upon them: they felt chilled to the heart. They could find nothing to say to each other. However, they forced themselves to speak, but every word they said rang hollowly, and made them feel the emptiness of their lives at that moment. They finished their walk mechanically, seeing nothing, feeling nothing. They returned home sick at heart. It was twilight: their rooms were cold, black, and empty. They did not light up at once, to avoid seeing each other. Jacqueline went into her room, and, instead of taking off her hat and cloak, she sat in silence by the window. Olivier sat, too, in the next room with his arms resting on the table. The door was open between the two rooms; they were so near that they could have heard each other's breathing. And in the semi-darkness they both wept, in silence, bitterly. They held their hands over their mouths, so that they should make no sound. At last, in agony, Olivier said:

"Jacqueline. . . ."

Jacqueline gulped down her sobs, and said:

"What is it?"

"Aren't you coming?"

"Yes, I'm coming."

She took off her hat and cloak, and went and bathed her eyes. He lit the lamp. In a few minutes she came into the room. They did not look at each other. Each knew that the other had been weeping. And they could not console each other, for they knew not why it was.

Then came a time when they could no longer conceal their unhappiness. And as they would not admit the true cause of

it, they cast about for another, and had no difficulty in finding it. They set it down to the dullness of provincial life and their surroundings. They found comfort in that. M. Langeais was informed of their plight by his daughter, and was not greatly surprised to hear that she was beginning to weary of heroism. He made use of his political friends, and obtained a post in Paris for his son-in-law.

When the good news reached them, Jacqueline jumped for joy and regained all her old happiness. Now that they were going to leave it, they found that they were quite fond of the dull country: they had sown so many memories of love in it! They occupied their last days in going over the traces of their love. There was a tender melancholy in their pilgrimage. Those calm stretches of country had seen them happy. An inward voice murmured:

"You know what you are leaving behind you. Do you know what lies before you?"

Jacqueline wept the day before they left. Olivier asked her why. She would not say. They took a sheet of paper, and as they always did when they were fearful of the sound of words, wrote:

"My dear, dear Olivier. . . ."
"My dear, dear Jacqueline. . . ."
"I am sorry to be going away."
"Going away from what?"
"From the place where we have been lovers."
"Going where?"
"To a place where we shall be older."
"To a place where we shall be together."
"But never so loving."
"Always more loving."
"Who can tell?"
"I know."
"I will be."

Then they drew two circles at the bottom of the paper for kisses. And then she dried her tears, laughed, and dressed him up as a favorite of Henri III. by putting her toque on his head and her white cape with its collar turned up like a ruff round his shoulders.

In Paris they resumed all their old friendships, but they did not find their friends just as they had left them. When he heard of Olivier's arrival, Christophe rushed to him delightedly. Olivier was equally rejoiced to see him. But as soon as they met they felt an unaccountable constraint between them. They both tried to break through it, but in vain. Olivier was very affectionate, but there was a change in him, and Christophe felt it. A friend who marries may do what he will: he cannot be the friend of the old days. The woman's soul is, and must be, merged in the man's. Christophe could detect the woman in everything that Olivier said and did, in the imperceptible light of his expression, in the unfamiliar turn of his lips, in the new inflections of his voice and the trend of his ideas. Olivier was oblivious of it: but he was amazed to find Christophe so different from the man he had left. He did not go so far as to think that it was Christophe who had changed: he recognized that the change was in himself, and ascribed it to normal evolution, the inevitable result of the passing years; and he was surprised not to find the same progress in Christophe: he thought reproachfully that he had remained stationary in his ideas, which had once been so dear to him, though now they seemed naïve and out of date. The truth was that they did not sort well with the stranger soul which, unknown to himself, had taken up its abode in him. He was most clearly conscious of it when Jacqueline was present when they were talking: and then between Olivier's eyes and Christophe there was a veil of irony. However, they tried to conceal what they felt. Christophe went often to see them, and Jacqueline innocently let fly at him her barbed and poisoned shafts. He suffered her. But when he returned home he would feel sad and sorry.

Their first months in Paris were fairly happy for Jacqueline, and consequently for Olivier. At first she was busy with their new house: they had found a nice little flat looking on to a garden in an old street at Passy. Choosing furniture and wall-papers kept her time full for a few weeks. Jacqueline flung herself into it energetically, and almost passionately and exaggeratedly: it was as though her eternal happiness depended on the color of her hangings or the shape of an old chest. Then she resumed intercourse with her father and mother and

her friends. As she had entirely forgotten them during her year of love, it was as though she had made their acquaintance for the first time: just as part of her soul was merged in Olivier's, so part of Olivier's soul was merged in hers, and she saw her old friends with new eyes. They seemed to her to have gained much. Olivier did not lose by it at first. They were a set-off to each other. The moral reserve and the poetic light and shade of her husband made Jacqueline find more pleasure in those worldly people who only think of enjoying themselves, and of being brilliant and charming: and the seductive but dangerous failings of their world, which she knew so much better because she belonged to it, made her appreciate the security of her lover's affection. She amused herself with these comparisons, and loved to linger over them, the better to justify her choice.—She lingered over them to such an extent that sometimes she could not tell why she had made that choice. Happily, such moments never lasted long. She would be sorry for them, and was never so tender with Olivier as when they were past. Thereupon she would begin again. By the time it had become a habit with her it had ceased to amuse her: and the comparison became more aggressive: instead of complementing each other, the two opposing worlds declared war on each other. She began to wonder why Olivier lacked the qualities, if not some of the failings, which she now admired in her Parisian friends. She did not tell him so: but Olivier often felt his wife looking at him without any indulgence in her eyes, and it hurt him and made him uneasy.

However, he had not lost the ascendancy over Jacqueline which love had given him: and they would have gone on quite happily living their life of tender and hard-working intimacy for long enough had it not been for circumstances which altered their material condition and destroyed its delicate balance.

Quivi trovammo Pluto il gran nemico. . . .

A sister of Madame Langeais died. She was the widow of a rich manufacturer, and had no children. Her whole estate passed to the Langeais. Jacqueline's fortune was more than doubled by it. When she came in for her legacy, Olivier remembered what Christophe had said about money, and remarked:

"We were quite well off without it: perhaps it will be a bad thing for us."

Jacqueline laughed at him:

"Silly!" she said. "As though money could ever do any harm! We won't make any change in our way of living just yet."

Their life remained the same to all appearances: so much the same that after a certain time Jacqueline began to complain that they were not well enough off: proof positive that there was a change somewhere. And, in fact, although their income had been doubled or tripled, they spent the whole of it without knowing how they did it. They began to wonder how they had managed to live before. The money flew, and was swallowed up by a thousand new expenses, which seemed at once to be habitual and indispensable. Jacqueline had begun to patronize the great dressmakers: she had dismissed the family sempstress who came by the day, a woman she had known since she was a child. The days of the little fourpenny hats made out of nothing, though they were quite pretty all the same, were gone,—gone the days of the frocks which were not impeccably smart, though they had much of her own grace, and were, indeed, a part of herself! The sweet intimate charm which shone upon all about her grew fainter every day. The poetry of her nature was lost. She was becoming commonplace.

They changed their flat. The rooms which they had furnished with so much trouble and pleasure seemed narrow and ugly. Instead of the cozy little rooms, all radiant with her spirit, with a friendly tree waving its delicate foliage against the windows, they took an enormous, comfortable, well-arranged flat which they did not, could not, love, where they were bored to death. Instead of their old friendly belongings, they obtained furniture and hangings which were strangers to them. There was no place left for memories. The first years of their married life were swept away from their thoughts. . . . It is a great misfortune for two people living together to have the ties which bind them to their past love broken! The image of their love is a safeguard against the disappointment and hostility which inevitably succeed the first years of tenderness. . . . The power to spend largely had brought Jacqueline, both in Paris

and abroad—(for now that they were rich they often traveled) —into touch with a class of rich and useless people, whose society gave her a sort of contempt for the rest of mankind, all those who had work to do. With her marvelous power of adaptation, she very quickly caught the color of these sterile and rotten men and women. She could not fight against it. At once she became refractory and irritable, regarding the idea that it was possible—and right—to be happy in her domestic duties and the *aurea mediocritus* as mere "vulgar manners." She had lost even the capacity to understand the bygone days when she had so generously given herself in love.

Olivier was not strong enough to fight against it. He, too, had changed. He had given up his work, and had no fixed and compulsory occupation. He wrote, and the balance of his life was adjusted by it. Till then he had suffered because he could not give his whole life to art. Now that he could do so he felt utterly lost in the cloudy world. Art which is not also a profession, and supported by a healthy practical life, art which knows not the necessity of earning the daily bread, loses the best part of its force and its reality. It is only the flower of luxury. It is not—(what in the greatest, the only great, artists it is)—the sacred fruit of human suffering.—Olivier felt a disinclination to work, a desire to ask: "What is the good of it?" There was nothing to make him write: he would let his pen run on, he dawdled about, he had lost his bearings. He had lost touch with his own class of men and women patiently plowing the hard furrow of their lives. He had fallen into a different world, where he was ill at ease, though on the whole he did not find it unpleasant. Weak, amiable, and curious, he fell complacently to observing that world which was entirely lacking in consistency, though it was not without charm; and he did not see that little by little he was becoming contaminated by it: it was undermining his faith.

No doubt the transformation was not so rapid in him as it was in Jacqueline.—Women have the terrible privilege of being able suddenly to undergo a complete change. The way in which they suddenly die and then as suddenly come to life again is appalling to those who love them. And yet it is perfectly natural for a human being who is full of life without the curb

of the will not to be to-morrow what it is to-day. A woman is like running water. The man who loves her must follow the stream or divert it into the channel of his own life. In both cases there must be change. But it is a dangerous experience, and no man really knows love until he has gone through it. And its harmony is so delicate during the first years of married life that often the very smallest change in either husband or wife is enough to destroy their whole relationship. How much more perilous, then, is a sudden change of fortune or of circumstance! They must needs be very strong—or very indifferent to each other—to withstand it.

Jacqueline and Olivier were neither indifferent nor strong. They began to see each other in a new light: and the face of the beloved became strange to them. When first they made the sad discovery, they hid it from each other in loving pity: for they still loved each other. Olivier took refuge in his work, and by applying himself to it regularly, though with even less conviction than before, won through to tranquillity. Jacqueline had nothing. She did nothing. She would stay in bed for hours, or dawdle over her toilette, sitting idly, half dressed, motionless, lost in thought: and gradually a dumb misery crept over her like an icy mist. She could not break away from the fixed idea of love. . . . Love! Of things human the most Divine when it is the gift of self, a passionate and blind sacrifice. But when it is no more than the pursuit of happiness, it is the most senseless and the most elusive. . . . It was impossible for her to conceive any other aim in life. In moments of benevolence she had tried to take an interest in the sorrows of other people: but she could not do it. The sufferings of others filled her with an ungovernable feeling of repulsion: her nerves were not strong enough to bear them. To appease her conscience she had occasionally done something which looked like philanthropy: but the result had been tame and disappointing.

"You see," she would say to Christophe, "when one tries to do good one does harm. It is much better not to try. I'm not cut out for it."

Christophe would look at her: and he would think of a girl he had met, a selfish, immoral little grisette, absolutely incapable

of real affection, though, as soon as she saw anybody suffering, she was filled with motherly pity for him, even though she had not cared a rap for him before, even though he were a stranger to her. She was not abashed by the most horrible tasks, and she would even take a strange pleasure in doing those which demanded the greatest self-denial. She never stopped to think about it: she seemed to find in it a use for her obscure, hereditary, and eternally unexpressed idealism: her soul was atrophied as far as the rest of her life was concerned, but at such rare moments it breathed again: it gave her a sense of well-being and inward joy to be able to allay suffering: and her joy was then almost misplaced.—The goodness of that woman, who was selfish, the selfishness of Jacqueline, who was good in spite of it, were neither vice nor virtue, but in both cases only a matter of health. But the first was in the better case.

Jacqueline was crushed by the mere idea of suffering. She would have preferred death to physical illness. She would have preferred death to the loss of either of her sources of joy: her beauty or her youth. That she should not have all the happiness to which she thought herself entitled,—(for she believed in happiness, it was a matter of faith with her, wholeheartedly and absurdly, a religious belief),—and that others should have more happiness than herself, would have seemed to her the most horrible injustice. Happiness was not only a religion to her; it was a virtue. To be unhappy seemed to her to be an infirmity. Her whole life gradually came to revolve round that principle. Her real character had broken through the veils of idealism in which in girlish bashful modesty she had enshrouded herself. In her reaction against the idealism of the past she began to see things in a hard, crude light. Things were only true for her in proportion as they coincided with the opinion of the world and the smoothness of life. She had reached her mother's state of mind: she went to church, and practised religion punctiliously and indifferently. She never stopped to ask herself whether there was any real truth in it: she had other more positive mental difficulties: and she would think of the mystical revolt of her childhood with pitying irony.—And yet her new positivism was no more real than her

old idealism. She forced it. She was neither angel nor brute. She was just a poor bored woman.

She was bored, bored, bored: and her boredom was all the greater in that she could not excuse herself on the score of not being loved, or by saying that she could not endure Olivier. Her life seemed to be stunted, walled up, with no future prospect: she longed for a new happiness that should be perpetually renewed; her longing was utterly childish, for it never took into account her indifferent capacity for happiness. She was like so many women living idle lives with idle husbands, who have every reason to be happy, and yet never cease torturing themselves. There are many such couples, who are rich and blessed with health and lovely children, and clever and capable of feeling fine things, and possessed of the power to keep themselves employed and to do good, and to enrich their own lives and the lives of others. And they spend their time in moaning and groaning that they do not love each other, that they love some one else, or that they do not love somebody else—perpetually taken up with themselves, and their sentimental or sensual relations, and their pretended right to happiness, their conflicting egoism, and arguing, arguing, arguing, playing with their sham grand passion, their sham great suffering, and in the end believing in it, and—suffering. . . . If only some one would say to them:

"You are not in the least interesting. It is indecent to be so sorry for yourselves when you have so many good reasons for being happy!"

If only some one would take away their money, their health, all the marvelous gifts of which they are so unworthy! If only some one would once more lay the yoke of poverty and real suffering on these slaves who are incapable of being free and are driven mad by their liberty! If they had to earn their bread in the sweat of their brows, they would be glad enough to eat it. And if they were to come face to face with grim suffering, they would never dare to play with the sham. . . .

But, when all is said and done, they do suffer. They are ill. How, then, are they not to be pitied?—Poor Jacqueline was quite innocent, as innocent in drifting apart from Olivier as Olivier was in not holding her. She was what Nature had

made her. She did not know that marriage is a challenge to Nature, and that, when one has thrown down the gauntlet to Nature, it is only to be expected that she will arise and begin valiantly to wage the combat which one has provoked. She saw that she had been mistaken, and she was exasperated with herself; and her disillusion turned to hostility towards the thing she had loved, Olivier's faith, which had also been her own. An intelligent woman has, much more than a man, moments of an intuitive perception of things eternal: but it is more difficult for her to maintain her grip on them. Once a man has come by the idea of the eternal, he feeds it with his life-blood. A woman uses it to feed her own life: she absorbs it, and does not create it. She must always be throwing fresh fuel into her heart and mind: she cannot be self-sufficing. And if she cannot believe and love, she must destroy—except she possess the supreme virtue of serenity.

Jacqueline had believed passionately in a union based on a common faith, in the happiness of struggling and suffering together in accomplishment. But she had only believed in that endeavor, that faith, while they were gilded by the sun of love: and as the sun died down she saw them as barren, gloomy mountains standing out against the empty sky: and her strength failed her, so that she could go no farther on the road: what was the good of reaching the summit? What was there on the other side? It was a gigantic phantom and a snare! . . . Jacqueline could not understand how Olivier could go on being taken in by such fantastic notions which consumed life: and she began to tell herself that he was not very clever, nor very much alive. She was stifling in his atmosphere, in which she could not breathe, and the instinct of self-preservation drove her on to the attack, in self-defense. She strove to scatter and bring to dust the injurious beliefs of the man she still loved: she used every weapon of irony and seductive pleasure in her armory: she trammeled him with the tendrils of her desires and her petty cares: she longed to make him a reflection of herself, . . . herself who knew neither what she wanted nor what she was! She was humiliated by Olivier's want of success: and she did not care whether it were just or unjust; for she had come to believe that the only thing which saves a man of

talent from failure is success. Olivier was oppressed by his consciousness of her doubts, and his strength was sapped by it. However, he struggled on as best he could, as so many men have struggled, and will struggle, for the most part vainly, in the unequal conflict in which the selfish instinct of the woman upholds itself against the man's intellectual egoism by playing upon his weakness, his dishonesty, and his common sense, which is the name with which he disguises the wear and tear of life and his own cowardice.—At least, Jacqueline and Olivier were better than the majority of such combatants. For he would never have betrayed his ideal, as thousands of men do who drift with the demands of their laziness, their vanity, and their loves, into renunciation of their immortal souls. And, if he had done so, Jacqueline would have despised him. But, in her blindness, she strove to destroy that force in Olivier, which was hers also, their common safeguard: and by an instinctive strategical movement she undermined the friendship by which that force was upheld.

Since the legacy Christophe had become a stranger in their household. The affectation of snobbishness and a dull practical outlook on life which Jacqueline used wickedly to exaggerate in her conversations with him were more than he could bear. He would lash out sometimes, and say hard things, which were taken in bad part. They could never have brought about a rupture between the two friends: they were too fond of each other. Nothing in the world would have induced Olivier to give up Christophe. But he could not make Jacqueline feel the same about him; and, his love making him weak, he was incapable of hurting her. Christophe, who saw what was happening to him, and how he was suffering, made the choice easy by a voluntary withdrawal. He saw that he could not help Olivier in any way by staying, but rather made things worse. He was the first to give his friend reasons for turning from him: and Olivier, in his weakness, accepted those inadequate reasons, while he guessed what the sacrifice must have cost Christophe, and was bitterly sorry for it.

Christophe bore him no ill-will. He thought that there was much truth in the saying that a man's wife is his better half. For a man married is but the half of a man.

He tried to reconstruct his life without Olivier. But it was all in vain, and it was idle for him to pretend that the separation would only be for a short time: in spite of his optimism, he had many hours of sadness. He had lost the habit of loneliness. He had been alone, it is true, during Olivier's sojourn in the provinces: but then he had been able to pretend and tell himself that his friend was away for a time, and would return. Now that his friend had come back he was farther away than ever. His affection for him, which had filled his life for a number of years, was suddenly taken from him: it was as though he had lost his chief reason for working. Since his friendship for Olivier he had grown used to thinking with him and bringing him into everything he did. His work was not enough to supply the gap: for Christophe had grown used to weaving the image of his friend into his work. And now that his friend no longer took any interest in him, Christophe was thrown off his balance: he set out to find another affection to restore it.

Madame Arnaud and Philomela did not fail him. But just then such tranquil friendship as theirs was not enough.

However, the two women seemed to divine Christophe's sorrow, and they secretly sympathized with him. Christophe was much surprised one evening to see Madame Arnaud come into his room. Till then she had never ventured to call on him. She seemed to be somewhat agitated. Christophe paid no heed to it, and set her uneasiness down to her shyness. She sat down, and for some time said nothing. To put her at her ease, Christophe did the honors of his room. They talked of Olivier, with memories of whom the room was filled. Christophe spoke of him gaily and naturally, without giving so much as a hint of what had happened. But Madame Arnaud, knowing it, could not help looking at him pityingly and saying:

"You don't see each other now?"

He thought she had come to console him, and felt a gust of impatience, for he did not like any meddling with his affairs. He replied:

"Whenever we like."

She blushed, and said:

"Oh! it was not an indiscreet question!"

He was sorry for his gruffness, and took her hands:

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I am always afraid of his being blamed. Poor boy! He is suffering as much as I. . . . No, we don't see each other now."

"And he doesn't write to you?"

"No," said Christophe, rather shamefacedly. . . .

"How sad life is!" said Madame Arnaud, after a moment.

"No; life is not sad," he said. "But there are sad moments in it."

Madame Arnaud went on with veiled bitterness:

"We love, and then we love no longer. What is the good of it all?"

Christophe replied:

"It is good to have loved."

She went on:

"You have sacrificed yourself for him. If only our self-sacrifice could be of any use to those we love! But it makes them none the happier!"

"I have not sacrificed myself," said Christophe angrily. "And if I have, it is because it pleased me to do so. There's no room for arguing about it. One does what one has to do. If one did not do it, one would be unhappy, and suffer for it! There never was anything so idiotic as this talk of sacrifice! Clergymen, in the poverty of their hearts, mix it up with a cramped and morose idea of Protestant gloom. Apparently, if an act of sacrifice is to be good, it must be besotted. . . . Good Lord! if a sacrifice means sorrow to you, and not joy, then don't do it; you are unworthy of it. A man doesn't sacrifice himself for the King of Prussia, but for himself. If you don't feel the happiness that lies in the gift of yourself, then get out! You don't deserve to live."

Madame Arnaud listened to Christophe without daring to look at him. Suddenly she got up and said:

"Good-by."

Then he saw that she had come to confide in him, and said:

"Oh! forgive me. I'm a selfish oaf, and can only talk about myself. Please stay. Won't you?"

She said:

"No: I cannot. . . . Thank you. . . ."

And she left him.

It was some time before they met again. She gave no sign of life; and he did not go to see either her or Philomela. He was fond of both of them: but he was afraid of having to talk to them about things that made him sad. And, besides, for the time being, their calm, dull existence, with its too rarefied air, was not suited to his needs. He wanted to see new faces; it was imperative that he should find a new interest, a new love, to occupy his mind.

By way of being taken out of himself he began to frequent the theaters which he had neglected for a long time. The theater seemed to him to be an interesting school for a musician who wishes to observe and take note of the accents of the passions.

It was not that he had any greater sympathy with French plays than when he first came to live in Paris. Outside his small liking for their eternal stale and brutal subjects connected with the psycho-physiology of love, it seemed to him that the language of the French theater, especially in poetic drama, was ultra-false. Neither their prose nor their verse had anything in common with the living language and the genius of the people. Their prose was an artificial language, the language of a polite chronicle with the best, that of a vulgar feuilletonist with the worst. Their poetry justified Goethe's gibe:

"Poetry is all very well for those who have nothing to say."

It was a wordy and inverted prose: the profusion of metaphors clumsily tacked on to it in imitation of the lyricism of other nations produced an effect of utter falsity upon any sincere person. Christophe set no more store by these poetic dramas than he did by the Italian operas with their shrill mellifluous airs and their ornamental vocal exercises. He was much more interested in the actors than the plays. And the authors had tried hard to imitate them. *"It was hopeless to think that a play could be performed with any success unless the author had looked to it that his characters were modeled on the vices of the actors."* The situation was hardly at all changed since the time when Diderot wrote those lines. The actors had become the models of the art of the theater. As soon as any one of

them reached success, he had his theater, his compliant tailor-authors, and his plays made to measure.

Among these great mannikins of literary fashions Françoise Oudon attracted Christophe. Paris had been infatuated with her for a couple of years or so. She, too, of course, had her theater and her purveyors of parts: however, she did not only act in plays written for her: her mixed repertory ranged from Ibsen to Sardou, from Gabriele d'Annunzio to Dumas *fils,* from Bernard Shaw to the latest Parisian playwrights. Upon occasion she would even venture into the Versailles' avenues of the classic hexameter, or on to the deluge of images of Shakespeare. But she was ill at ease in that galley, and her audience was even more so. Whatever she played, she played herself, nothing but herself, always. It was both her weakness and her strength. Until the public had been awakened to an interest in her personality, her acting had had no success. As soon as that interest was roused, everything she did appeared marvelous. And, indeed, it was well worth while in watching her to forget the usually pitiful plays which she betrayed by endowing and adorning them with her vitality. The mystery of the woman's body, swayed by a stranger soul, was to Christophe far more moving than the plays in which she acted.

She had a fine, clear-cut, rather tragic profile. She had not the marked heavy lines of the Roman style: on the contrary, her lines were delicate and Parisian, *à la* Jean Goujon—as much like a boy's as a woman's. A short, finely-modeled nose. A beautiful mouth, with thin lips, curling rather bitterly. Bright cheeks, girlishly thin, in which there was something touching, the light of inward suffering. A strong chin. Pale complexion. One of those habitually impassive faces which are transparent in spite of themselves, and reveal the soul quivering behind it, as though it were exposed in its nakedness: one of those faces in which the soul seems to be ever, in every part of it, just beneath the skin. She had very fine hair and eyebrows, and her changing eyes were gray and amber-colored, passing quickly from one light to another, greenish and golden, like the eyes of a cat. And there was something catlike in all her nature, in her apparent torpor, her semi-somnolence, with eyes wide open, always on the watch, always suspicious, while suddenly

she would nervously and rather cruelly relax her watchfulness. She was not so tall as she appeared, nor so slender; she had beautiful shoulders, lovely arms, and fine, long hands. She was very neat in her dress, and her coiffure, always trim and tasteful, with none of the Bohemian carelessness or the exaggerated smartness of many artists—even in that she was catlike, instinctively aristocratic, although she had risen from the gutter. At bottom she was incurably shy and wild.

She must have been a little less than thirty. Christophe had heard people speak of her at Gamache's with coarse admiration, as a woman of great freedom, intelligence, and boldness, tremendous and inflexible energy, and burning ambition, but bitter, fantastic, perplexing, and violent, a woman who had waded through a deal of mud before she had reached her present pinnacle of fame, and had since avenged herself.

One day, when Christophe was going by train to see Philomela at Meudon, as he opened the door of a compartment, he saw the actress sitting there. She seemed to be agitated and perturbed, and Christophe's appearance annoyed her. She turned her back on him, and looked obstinately out of the opposite window. But Christophe was so struck by the changed expression in her face, that he could not stop gazing at her with a naïve and embarrassing compassion. It exasperated her, and she flung an angry look at him which he did not understand. At the next station she got out and went into another compartment. Then for the first time it occurred to him—rather late in the day—that he had driven her away: and he was greatly distressed. A few days later, at a station on the same line, he was sitting on the only seat in the platform, waiting for the train back to Paris. She appeared, and came and sat by his side. He began to move, but she said:

"Stay."

They were alone. He begged her pardon for having forced her to go to another compartment the other day, saying that if he had had any idea that he was incommoding her he would have got out himself. She smiled ironically, and only replied:

"You were certainly unbearable with your persistent staring."

He said:

"I begged your pardon: I could not help it. . . . You looked so unhappy."

"Well, what of it?" she said.

"It was too strong for me. If you saw a man drowning, wouldn't you hold out your hand to him?"

"I? Certainly not," she said. "I would push him under water, so as to get it over quickly."

She spoke with a mixture of bitterness and humor: and, when he looked at her in amazement, she laughed.

The train came in. It was full up, except for the last carriage. She got in. The porter told them to hurry up. Christophe, who had no mind to repeat the scene of a few days before, was for finding another compartment, but she said:

"Come in."

He got in, and she said:

"To-day I don't mind."

They began to talk. Christophe tried very seriously to prove to her that it was not right not to take an interest in others, and that people could do so much for each other by helping and comforting each other. . . .

"Consolation," she said, "is not much in my line. . . ."

And as Christophe insisted:

"Yes," she said, with her impertinent smile: "the part of comforter is all very well for the man who plays it."

It was a moment or two before he grasped her meaning. When he understood, when he fancied that she suspected him of seeking his own interest, while he was only thinking of her, he got up indignantly and opened the door, and made as though to climb out, although the train was moving. She prevented him, though not without difficulty. He sat down again angrily, and shut the door just as the train shot into a tunnel.

"You see," she said, "you might have been killed."

"I don't care," he said.

He refused to speak to her again.

"People are so stupid," he said. "They make each other suffer, they suffer, and when a man goes to help another fellow-creature, he is suspected. It is disgusting. People like that are not human."

She laughed and tried to soothe him. She laid her gloved

hand on his: she spoke to him gently, and called him by his name.

"What?" he said. "You know me?"

"As if everybody didn't know everybody in Paris! We're all in the same boat. But it was horrid of me to speak to you as I did. You are a good fellow. I can see that. Come; calm yourself. Shake hands! Let us make peace!"

They shook hands, and went on talking amicably. She said:

"It is not my fault, you know. I have had so many experiences with men that I have become suspicious."

"They have deceived me, too, many a time," said Christophe. "But I always give them credit for something better."

"I see; you were born to be gulled."

He began to laugh:

"Yes; I've been taken in a good many times in my life; I've gulped down a good many lies. But it does me no harm. I've a good stomach. I can put up with worse things, hardship, poverty, and, if necessary, I can gulp down with their lies the poor fools who attack me. It does me good, if anything."

"You're in luck," she said. "You're something like a man."

"And you. You're something like a woman."

"That's no great thing."

"It's a fine thing," he said, "and it may be a good thing, too!"

She laughed:

"To be a woman!" she said. "But what does the world make of women?"

"You have to defend yourself."

"But goodness never lasts long."

"Then you can't have much of it."

"Possibly. And then, I don't think one ought to suffer too much. There is a point beyond which suffering withers you up."

He was just about to tell her how he pitied her, but he remembered how she had received it a short while before. . . .

"You'll only talk about the advantages of the part of comforter. . . ."

"No," she said, "I won't say it again. I feel that you are

kind and sincere. Thank you. Only, don't say anything. You cannot know. . . . Thank you."

They had reached Paris. They parted without exchanging addresses or inviting each other to call.

A few months later she came of her own accord and knocked at Christophe's door.

"I came to see you. I want to talk to you. I have been thinking of you sometimes since our meeting."

She took a seat.

"Only for a moment. I shan't disturb you for long."

He began to talk to her. She said:

"Wait a moment, please."

They sat in silence. Then she said with a smile:

"I couldn't bear it any longer. I feel better now."

He tried to question her.

"No," she said. "Not that!"

She looked round the room, examined and appraised the things in it, and saw the photograph of Louisa:

"Your mother?" she said.

"Yes."

She took it and looked at it sympathetically.

"What a good old woman!" she said. "You are lucky!"

"Alas! she is dead."

"That is nothing. You have had the luck to have her for your mother."

"Yes. And you?"

But she turned the subject with a frown. She would not let him question her about herself.

"No; tell me about yourself. Tell me. . . . Something about your life. . . ."

"How can it be of any interest to you?"

"Tell me, all the same. . . ."

He would not tell her: but he could not avoid answering her questions, for she cross-examined him very skilfully: so much so, that he told her something of what he was suffering, the story of his friendship, and how Olivier had left him. She listened with a pitying ironical smile. . . . Suddenly she asked:

"What time is it? Oh! good Heavens! I've been here two whole hours! . . . Please forgive me. . . . Ah! what a rest it has been! . . ."

She added:

"Will you let me come again? . . . Not often. . . . Sometimes. . . . It would do me good. But I wouldn't like to bore you or waste your time. . . . Only a minute or two every now and then. . . ."

"I'll come and see you," said Christophe.

"No, don't do that. I would much rather come to see you. . . ."

But she did not come again for a long time. One evening he heard by accident that she was seriously ill, and had not been acting for some weeks. He went to see her, although she had forbidden it. She was not at home: but when she heard who it was, she sent and had him brought back as he was going down the stairs. She was in bed, but much better: she had had pneumonia, and looked altered: but she still had her ironical manner and her watchful expression, which there was no disarming. However, she seemed to be really pleased to see Christophe. She made him sit by her bedside, and talked about herself in a mocking, detached way, and said that she had almost died. He was much moved, and showed it. Then she teased him. He reproached her for not having let him know.

"Let you know? And have you coming to see me? Never!"

"I bet you never even thought of me."

"You've won," she said, with her sad little mocking smile. "I didn't think of you for a moment while I was ill. To be precise, I never thought of you until to-day. There's nothing to be glum about, come. When I am ill I don't think of anybody. I only ask one thing of people; to be left alone in peace. I turn my face to the wall and wait: I want to be alone. I want to die alone, like a rat in a hole."

"And yet it is hard to suffer alone."

"I'm used to it. I have been unhappy for years. No one ever came to my assistance. Now it has become a habit. . . . Besides, it is better so. No one can do anything for you. A

noise in the room, worrying attentions, hypocritical jeremiads. . . . No; I would rather die alone."

"You are very resigned!"

"Resigned? I don't even know what the word means. No: I set my teeth and I hate the illness which makes me suffer."

He asked her if she had no one to see her, no one to look after her. She said that her comrades at the theater were kind enough,—idiots,—but obliging and compassionate (in a superficial sort of way).

"But I tell you, I don't want to see them. I'm a surly sort of customer."

"I would put up with it," he said.

She looked at him pityingly:

"You, too! You're going to talk like the rest?"

He said:

"Pardon, pardon. . . . Good Heavens! I'm becoming a Parisian! I am ashamed. . . . I swear that I didn't even think what I was saying. . . ."

He buried his face in the bedclothes. She laughed frankly, and gave him a tap on the head!

"Ah! that's not Parisian! That's something like! I know you again. Come, show your face. Don't weep all over my bed."

"Do you forgive me?"

"I forgive you. But don't do it again."

She talked to him a little more, asked him what he was doing, and was then tired, bored, and dismissed him.

He had arranged to go and see her again the following week. But just as he was setting out he received a telegram from her telling him not to come: she was having a bad day.—Then, the next day but one, she sent for him. He went, and found her convalescent, sitting by the window, with her feet up. It was early spring, with a sunny sky and the young buds on the trees. She was more gentle and affectionate than he had yet seen her. She told him that she could not see anybody the other day, and would have detested him as much as anybody else.

"And to-day?"

"To-day I feel young and fresh, and I feel fond of everything else about me that feels young and fresh—as you do."

"And yet I am neither very young nor very fresh."

"You will be both until the day of your death."

They talked about what he had been doing since their last meeting, and about the theater in which she was going to resume her work soon: and on that she told him what she thought of the theater, which disgusted her, while it held her in its grip.

She did not want him to come again, and promised to resume her visits to his flat. He told her the times when she would be least likely to disturb his work. They arranged a countersign. She was to knock at the door in a certain way, and he was to open or not as he felt inclined. . . .

She did not go beyond bounds at first. But once, when she was going to a society At Home, where she was to recite, the idea of it bored her at the last moment: she stopped on the way and telephoned to say that she could not come, and she told her man to drive to Christophe's. She only meant to say good-night to him as she passed. But, as it turned out, she began to confide in him that night, and told him all her life from her childhood on.

A sad childhood! An accidental father whom she had never known. A mother who kept an ill-famed inn in a suburb of a town in the north of France: the carters used to go and drink there, use the proprietress, and bully her. One of them married her because she had some small savings: he used to beat her and get drunk. Françoise had an elder sister who was a servant in the inn: she was worked to death; the proprietor made her his mistress in the sight and knowledge of her mother; she was consumptive, and had died. Françoise had grown up amid scenes of violence and shameful things. She saw her mother and sister weep, suffer, accept, degrade themselves, and die. And desperately she made up her mind not to submit to it, and to escape from her infamous surroundings: she was a rebel by instinct: certain acts of injustice would set her beside herself: she used to scratch and bite when she was thrashed. Once she tried to hang herself. She did not succeed: she had hardly set about it than she was afraid lest she might succeed only too well; and, even while she was beginning to choke and desperately

clutching at the rope and trying to loosen it with stiff fumbling fingers, there was writhing in her a furious desire to live. And since she could not escape by death,—(Christophe smiled sadly, remembering his own experiences,)—she swore that she would win, and be free, rich, and trample under foot all those who oppressed her. She had made it a vow in her lair one evening, when in the next room she could hear the oaths of the man, and the cries of her mother as he beat her, and her sister's sobs. How utterly wretched she felt! And yet her vow had been some solace. She clenched her teeth and thought:

"I will crush the lot of you."

In that dark childhood there had been one ray of light:

One day, one of the little grubby boys with whom she used to lark in the gutter, the son of the stage-door keeper of the theater, got her in to the rehearsal, although it was strictly forbidden. They stole to the very back of the building in the darkness. She was gripped by the mystery of the stage, gleaming in the darkness, and by the magnificent and incomprehensible things that the actors were saying, and by the queenly bearing of the actress,—who was, in fact, playing a queen in a romantic melodrama. She was chilled by emotion: and at the same time her heart thumped. . . . "That—that is what I must be some day!" . . . Oh! if she could ever be like that! . . . —When it was over she wanted at all costs to see the evening performance. She let her companion go out, and pretended to follow him: and then she turned back and hid herself in the theater: she cowered away under a seat, and stayed there for three hours without stirring, choked by the dust: and when the performance was about to begin and the audience was arriving, just as she was creeping out of her hiding-place, she had the mortification of being pounced on, ignominiously expelled amid jeers and laughter, and taken home, where she was whipped. She would have died that night had she not known now what she must do later on to master these people and avenge herself on them.

Her plan was made. She took a situation as a servant in the *Hôtel et Café du Théâtre,* where the actors put up. She could hardly read or write: and she had read nothing, for she had nothing to read. She wanted to learn, and applied herself

to it with frantic energy. She used to steal books from the guests' rooms, and read them at night by moonlight or at dawn, so as not to use her candle. Thanks to the untidiness of the actors, her larcenies passed unnoticed or else the owners put up with cursing and swearing. She used to restore their books when she had read them,—except one or two which had moved her too much for her to be able to part with them;—but she did not return them intact. She used to tear out the pages which had pleased her. When she took the books back, she used carefully to slip them under the bed or the furniture, so as to make the owners of them believe that they had never left the room. She used to glue her ears to the door to listen to the actors going over their parts. And when she was alone, sweeping the corridor, she would mimic their intonations in a whisper and gesticulate. When she was caught doing so she was laughed at and jeered at. She would say nothing, and boil with rage.—That sort of education might have gone on for a long time had she not on one occasion been imprudent enough to steal the script of a part from the room of an actor. The actor stamped and swore. No one had been to his room except the servant: he accused her. She denied it boldly: he threatened to have her searched: she threw herself at his feet and confessed everything, even to her other pilferings and the pages she had torn out of the books: the whole boiling. He cursed and swore frightfully: but he was not so angry as he seemed. He asked why she had done it. When she told him that she wanted to become an actress he roared with laughter. He questioned her, and she recited whole pages which she had learned by heart: he was struck by it, and said:

"Look here, would you like me to give you lessons?"

She was in the highest heaven of delight, and kissed his hands.

"Ah!" she said to Christophe, "how I should have loved him!"

But at once he added:

"Only, my dear, you know you can't have anything for nothing. . . ."

She was chaste, and had always been scared and modest with those who had pursued her with their overtures. Her absolute chastity, her ardent need of purity, her disgust with things

unclean and ignoble loveless sensuality, had been with her always from her childhood on, as a result of the despair and nausea of the sad sights which she saw about her on all sides at home:—and they were with her still. . . . Ah! unhappy creature! She had borne much punishment! . . . What a mockery of Fate! . . .

"Then," asked Christophe, "you consented?"

"Ah!" she said, "I would have gone through fire to get out of it. He threatened to have me arrested as a thief. I had no choice.—That was how I was initiated into art—and life."

"The blackguard!" said Christophe.

"Yes, I hated him. But I have met so many men since that he does not seem to me to be one of the worst. He did at least keep his word. He taught me what he knew—(not much!)—of the actor's trade. He got me into his company. At first I was everybody's servant. I played little scraps of parts. Then one night, when the soubrette was ill, they risked giving me her part. I went on from that. They thought me impossible, grotesque, uncouth. I was ugly then. I remained ugly until I was decreed,—if not 'divine' like the other Woman,—the highest, the ideal type of woman, . . .'Woman.' . . . Idiots! As for my acting, it was thought extravagant and incorrect. The public did not like me. The other players used to make fun of me. I was kept on because I was useful in spite of everything, and was not expensive. Not only was I not expensive, but I paid! Ah! I paid for every step, every advance, rung by rung, with my suffering, with my body. Fellow-actors, the manager, the impresario, the impresario's friends. . . ."

She stopped: her face was very pale, her lips were pressed together, there was a hard stare in her eyes: no tears came, but it was plain to see that her soul was shedding tears of blood. In a flash she was living through the shameful past, and the consuming desire to conquer which had upheld her—a desire that burned the more with every fresh stain and degradation that she had had to endure. She would sometimes have been glad to die: but it would have been too abominable to succumb in the midst of humiliation and to go no farther. Better to take her life before—if so it must be—or after vic-

tory. But not when she had degraded herself and not enjoyed the price of it. . . .

She said no more. Christophe was pacing up and down the room in anger: he was in a mood to slay these men who had made this woman suffer and besmirched her. Then he looked at her with the eyes of pity: and he stood near her and took her face in his hands and pressed it fondly, and said:

"Poor little woman!"

She made to thrust him away. He said:

"You must not be afraid of me. I love you."

Then the tears trickled down her pale cheeks. He knelt down by her and kissed—

"La lunga man d'ogni bellezza piena. . . ."

—the long delicate hands on which two tears had fallen.

He sat down again, and she recovered herself and calmly went on with her story:

An author had at last launched her. He had discovered in the strange little creature a daimon, a genius,—and, even better for his purpose, "a dramatic type, a new woman, representative of an epoch." Of course, he made her his mistress after so many others had done the same. And she let him take her, as she had suffered the others, without love, and even with the opposite of love. But he had made her famous: and she had done the same for him.

"And now," said Christophe, "the others cannot do anything to you: you can do what you like with them."

"You think so?" she said bitterly.

Then she told him of Fate's other mockery,—her passion for a knave whom she despised: a literary man who had exploited her, had plucked out the most sorrowful secrets of her soul, and turned them into literature, and then had left her.

"I despise him," she said, "as I despise the dirt on my boots: and I tremble with rage when I think that I love him, that he has but to hold up his finger, and I should go running to him, and humble myself before such a cur. But what can I do? I have a heart that will never love what my mind

desires. And I am compelled alternately to sacrifice and humiliate one or the other. I have a heart: I have a body. And they cry out and cry out and demand their share of happiness. And I have nothing to curb them with, for I believe in nothing. I am free. . . . Free? I am the slave of my heart and my body, which often, almost always, in spite of myself, desire and have their will. They carry me away, and I am ashamed. But what can I do? . . ."

She stopped for a moment, and mechanically moved the cinders in the fire with the tongs.

"I have read in books," she said, "that actors feel nothing. And, indeed, those whom I meet are nearly all conceited, grown-up children who are never troubled by anything but petty questions of vanity. I do not know if it is they who are not true comedians, or myself. I fancy it must be I. In any case, I pay for the others."

She stopped speaking. It was three in the morning. She got up to go. Christophe told her to wait until the morning before she went home, and proposed that she should go and lie down on his bed. She preferred to stay in the arm-chair by the dead fire, and went on talking quietly while all the house was still.

"You will be tired to-morrow."

"I am used to it. But what about you? . . . What are you doing to-morrow?"

"I am free. I have a lesson to give about eleven. . . . Besides, I am strong."

"All the more reason why you should sleep soundly."

"Yes; I sleep like a log. Not even pain can stand out against it. I am sometimes furious with myself for sleeping so well. So many hours wasted! . . . I am delighted to be able to take my revenge on sleep for once in a way, and to cheat it of a night."

They went on talking in low tones, with long intervals of silence. And Christophe went to sleep. Françoise smiled and supported his head to keep him from falling. . . . She sat by the window dreaming and looking down into the darkness of the garden, which presently was lit up. About seven o'clock she woke Christophe gently, and said good-by.

In the course of the month she came at times when Christophe was out, and found the door shut. Christophe sent her a key to the flat, so that she could go there when she liked. She went more than once when Christophe was away, and she would leave a little bunch of violets on the table, or a few words scribbled on a sheet of paper, or a sketch, or a caricature—just to show that she had been.

And one evening, when she left the theater, she went to the flat to resume their pleasant talk. She found him at work, and they began to talk. But at the very outset they both felt that the friendly comfortable mood of the last occasion was gone. She tried to go: but it was too late. Not that Christophe did anything to prevent her. It was her own will that failed her and would not let her go. They stayed there with the gathering consciousness of the desire that was in them.

Following on that night she disappeared for some weeks. In him there had been roused a sensual ardor that had lain dormant for months before, and he could not live without her. She had forbidden him to go to her house: he went to see her at the theater. He sat far back, and he was aflame with love and devotion: every nerve in his body thrilled: the tragic intensity which she brought to her acting consumed him also in its fire. At last he wrote to her:

"My dear,—Are you angry with me? Forgive me if I have hurt you."

When she received his humble little note she hastened to him and flung herself into his arms.

"It would have been better to be just friends, good friends. But since it is impossible, it is no good holding out against the inevitable. Come what may!"

They lived together. They kept on in their separate flats, and each of them was free. Françoise could not have submitted to living openly with Christophe. Besides, her position would not allow it. She used to go to Christophe's flat and spend part of the day and night with him; but she used to return to her own place every day and also sleep there.

During the vacation, when the theater was closed, they took a house together outside Paris, near Gif. They had many happy days there, though there were clouds of sadness too. They were days of confidence and work. They had a beautiful light room, high up, with a wide view over the fields. At night through the window they could see the strange shadows of the clouds floating across the clear, dull darkness of the sky. Half asleep, they could hear the joyous crickets chirping and the showers falling; the breath of the autumn earth—honeysuckle, clematis, glycine, and new-mown hay—filled the house and soothed their senses. The silence of the night. In the distance dogs barked. Cocks crowed. Dawn comes. The tinkling angelus rings in the distant belfry, through the cold, gray twilight, and they shiver in the warmth of their nest, and yet more lovingly hold each other close. The voices of the birds awake in the trellis on the wall. Christophe opens his eyes, holds his breath, and his heart melts as he looks down at the dear tired face of his sleeping beloved, pale with the paleness of love. . . .

Their love was no selfish passion. It was a profound love in comradeship, in which the body also demanded its share. They did not hinder each other. They both went on with their work. Christophe's genius and kindness and moral fiber were dear to Françoise. She felt older than he in many ways, and she found a maternal pleasure in the relation. She regretted her inability to understand anything he played: music was a closed book to her, except at rare moments, when she would be overcome by a wild emotion, which came less from the music than from her own inner self, from the passion in which she was steeped at that time, she and everything about her, the country, people, color, and sound. But she was none the less conscious of Christophe's genius, because it was expressed in a mysterious language which she did not understand. It was like watching a great actor playing in a foreign language. Her own genius was rekindled by it. Christophe, thanks to love, could project his ideas and body forth his passions in the mind of the woman and her beloved person: they seemed to him more beautiful there than they were in himself—endowed with

an antique and seemingly eternal beauty. Intimacy with such a soul, so feminine, so weak and kind and cruel, and genial in flashes, was a source of boundless wealth. She taught him much about life, and men—about women, of whom he knew very little, while she judged them with swift, unerring perception. But especially he was indebted to her for a better understanding of the theater; she helped him to pierce through to the spirit of that admirable art, the most perfect of all arts, the fullest and most sober. She revealed to him the beauty of that magic instrument of the human dream,—and made him see that he must write for it and not for himself, as he had a tendency to do,—(the tendency of too many artists, who, like Beethoven, refuse to write *"for a confounded violin when the Spirit speaks to them"*).—A great dramatic poet is not ashamed to work for a particular theater and to adapt his ideas to the actors at his disposal: he sees no belittlement in that: but he knows that a vast auditorium calls for different methods of expression than those necessary for a smaller space, and that a man does not write trumpet-blares for the flute. The theater, like the fresco, is art fitted to its place. And therefore it is above all else the human art, the living art.

Françoise's ideas were in accordance with Christophe's, who, at that stage in his career, was inclined towards a collective art, in communion with other men. Françoise's experience helped him to grasp the mysterious collaboration which is set up between the audience and the actor. Though Françoise was a realist, and had very few illusions, yet she had a great perception of the power of reciprocal suggestion, the waves of sympathy which pass between the actor and the multitude, the great silence of thousands of men and women from which arises the single voice of their interpreter. Naturally she could only feel it in intermittent flashes, very, very rare, which were hardly ever reproduced at the same passages in the same play. For the rest her work was a soulless trade, an intelligent and coldly mechanical routine. But the interest of it lay in the exception —the flash of light which pierced the darkness of the abyss, the common soul of millions of men and women whose living force was expressed in her for the space of a second of eternity.

It was this common soul which it was the business of the great artist to express. His ideal should be a living objectivism, in which the poet should throw himself into those for whom he sings, and denude himself of self, to clothe the collective passions which are blown over the world like a mighty wind. Françoise was all the more keenly conscious of the necessity, inasmuch as she was incapable of such disinterestedness, and always played herself.—For the last century and a half the disordered efflorescence of individual lyricism has been tinged with morbidity. Moral greatness consists in feeling much and controlling much, in being sober in words and chaste in thought, in not making a parade of it, in making a look speak and speak profoundly, without childish exaggeration or effeminate effusiveness, to those who can grasp the half-spoken thought, to men. Modern music, which is so loquaciously introspective, dragging in indiscreet confidences at every turn, is immodest and lacking in taste. It is like those invalids who can think of nothing but their illnesses, and never weary of discussing them with other people and going into repulsive petty details. This travesty of art has been growing more and more prevalent for the last century. Françoise, who was no musician, was disposed to see a sign of decadence in the development of music at the expense of poetry, like a polypus sucking it dry. Christophe protested: but, upon reflection, he began to wonder whether there might not be some truth in it. The first *lieder* written to poems of Goethe were sober and apt: soon Schubert came and infused his romantic sentimentality into them and gave them a twist: Schumann introduced his girlish languor: and, down to Hugo Wolf, the movement had gone on towards more stress in declamation, indecent analysis, a presumptuous endeavor to leave no smallest corner of the soul unlit. Every veil about the mysteries of the heart was rent. Things said in all earnestness by a man were now screamed aloud by shameless girls who showed themselves in their nakedness.

Christophe was rather ashamed of such art, by which he was himself conscious of being contaminated: and, without seeking to go back to the past,—(an absurd, unnatural desire),—he steeped himself in the spirit of those of the masters of the past who had been haughtily discreet in their thought and had possessed

the sense of a great collective art: like Handel, who, scorning the tearful piety of his time and country, wrote his colossal *Anthems* and his oratorios, those heroic epics which are songs of the nations for the nations. The difficulty was to find inspiring subjects, which, like the Bible in Handel's time, could arouse emotions common to all the nations of modern Europe. Modern Europe had no common book: no poem, no prayer, no act of faith which was the property of all. Oh! the shame that should overwhelm all the writers, artists, thinkers, of to-day! Not one of them has written, not one of them has thought, for all. Only Beethoven has left a few pages of a new Gospel of consolation and brotherhood: but only musicians can read it, and the majority of men will never hear it. Wagner, on the hill at Bayreuth, has tried to build a religious art to bind all men together. But his great soul had too little simplicity and too many of the blemishes of the decadent music and thought of his time: not the fishers of Galilee have come to the holy hill, but the Pharisees.

Christophe felt sure what he had to do: but he had no poet, and he was forced to be self-sufficing and to confine himself to music. And music, whatever people say, is not a universal language: the bow of words is necessary to send the arrow of sound into the hearts of all men.

Christophe planned to write a suite of symphonies inspired by everyday life. Among others he conceived a Domestic Symphony, in his own manner, which was very different from that of Richard Strauss. He was not concerned with materializing family life in a cinematograph picture, by making use of a conventional alphabet, in which musical themes expressed arbitrarily the various characters whom, if the auditor's eyes and ears could stand it, were presently to be seen going through divers evolutions together. That seemed to him a pedantic and childish game for a great contrapuntist. He did not try to describe characters or actions, but only to express emotions familiar to every man and woman, in which they could find the echo of their own souls, and perhaps comfort and relief. The first movement expressed the grave and simple happiness of a loving young couple, with its tender sensuality, its confidence in the future, its joy and hopes. The second movement

was an elegy on the death of a child. Christophe had avoided with horror any effort to depict death, and realistic detail in the expression of sorrow: there was only the utter misery of it,—yours, mine, everybody's, of being face to face with a misfortune which falls or may fall to the lot of everybody. The soul, prostrate in its grief, from which Christophe had banned the usual effects of sniveling melodrama, recovered bit by bit, in a sorrowful effort, to offer its suffering as a sacrifice to God. Once more it set bravely out on the road, in the next movement, which was linked with the second,—a headstrong fugue, the bold design and insistent rhythm of which captivated, and, through struggles and tears, led on to a mighty march, full of indomitable faith. The last movement depicted the evening of life. The themes of the opening movement reappeared in it with their touching confidence and their tenderness which could not grow old, but riper, emerging from the shadow of sorrow, crowned with light, and, like a rich blossoming, raising a religious hymn of love to life and God.

Christophe also rummaged in the books of the past for great, simple, human subjects speaking to the best in the hearts of all men. He chose two such stories: *Joseph* and *Niobe*. But then Christophe was brought up not only against his need of a poet, but against the vexed question, which has been argued for centuries and never solved, of the union of poetry and music. His talks with Françoise had brought him back to his idea, sketched out long ago with Corinne, of a form of musical drama, somewhere between recitative opera and the spoken drama,—the art of the free word united with free music, —an art of which hardly any artist of to-day has a glimmering, an art also which the routine critics, imbued with the Wagnerian tradition, deny, as they deny every really new work: for it is not a matter of following in the footsteps of Beethoven, Weber, Schumann, Bizet, although they used the melodramatic form with genius: it is not a matter of yoking any sort of speaking voice to any sort of music, and producing, at all costs, with absurd tremolos, coarse effects upon coarse audiences: it is a matter of creating a new form, in which musical voices will be wedded to instruments attuned to those voices, discreetly mingling with their harmonious periods the echo of dreams and

the plaintive murmur of music. It goes without saying that such a form could only be applied to a narrow range of subjects, to intimate and introspective moments of the soul, so as to conjure up its poetic perfume. In no art should there be more discretion and aristocracy of feeling. It is only natural, therefore, that it should have little chance of coming to flower in an age which, in spite of the pretensions of its artists, reeks of the deep-seated vulgarity of upstarts.

Perhaps Christophe was no more suited to such an art than the rest: his very qualities, his plebeian force, were obstacles in the way. He could only conceive it, and with the aid of Françoise realize a few rough sketches.

In this way he set to music passages from the Bible, almost literally transcribed,—like the immortal scene in which Joseph makes himself known to his brothers, and, after so many trials, can no longer contain his emotion and tender feeling, and whispers the words which have wrung tears from old Tolstoy, and many another:

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself. . . . I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. I am Joseph. . . ."

Their beautiful and free relation could not last. They had moments splendid and full of life: but they were too different. They were both strong-willed, and then often clashed. But their differences were never of a vulgar character: for Christophe had won Françoise's respect. And Françoise, who could sometimes be so cruel, was kind to those who were kind to her; no power on earth could have made her do anything to hurt them. And besides, both of them had a fund of gay humor. She was always the first to laugh at herself. She was still eating her heart out: for the old passion still had its grip on her: she still thought of the blackguard she loved: and she could not bear to be in so humiliating a position or, above all, to have Christophe suspecting what she was feeling.

Christophe would sometimes find her for days together silent and restless and given up to melancholy, and could not understand how she could be unhappy. She had achieved her end: she was a great artist, admired, flattered. . . .

"Yes," she would say; "that would be all very well if I were one of those famous actresses, with no soul above shop-keeping, who run the theater just as they would run any other business. They are quite happy when they have 'realized' a good position, a commonplace, wealthy marriage, and—the *ne plus ultra*—been decorated. I wanted more than that. Unless one is a fool, success is even more empty than failure. You must know that!"

"I know," said Christophe. "Ah! Dear God, that is not what I imagined fame to be when I was a child. How I longed for it, and what a shining thing it seemed to be! It was almost a religion to me then. . . . No matter! There is one divine virtue in success: the good it gives one the power to do."

"What good? One has conquered. But what's the good of it? Nothing is altered. Theaters, concerts, everything is just the same. A new fashion succeeds the old: that is all. They do not understand one, or only superficially: and they begin to think of something else at once. . . . Do you yourself understand other artists? In any case, they don't understand you. The people you love best are so far away from you! Look at your Tolstoy. . . ."

Christophe had written to him: he had been filled with enthusiasm for him, and had wept over his books: he wanted to set one of the peasant tales to music, and had asked for his authority, and had sent him his *lieder*. Tolstoy did not reply, any more than Goethe replied to Schubert or Berlioz when they sent him their masterpieces. He had had Christophe's music played to him, and it had irritated him: he could make nothing of it. He regarded Beethoven as a decadent, and Shakespeare as a charlatan. On the other hand, he was infatuated with various little pretty-pretty masters, and the harpsichord music which used to charm the *Roi-Perruque:* and he regarded *La Confession d'une Femme de Chambre* as a Christian book. . . .

"Great men have no need of us," said Christophe. "We must think of the others."

"Who? The dull public, the shadows who hide life from us? Act, write for such people? Give your life for them? That would be bitter indeed!"

"Bah!" said Christophe. "I see them as they are just

as you do: but I don't let it make me despondent. They are not as bad as you say."

"Dear old German optimist!"

"They are men, like myself. Why should they not understand me? . . .—And suppose they don't understand me, why should I despair? Among all the thousands of people there will surely be one or two who will be with me: that is enough for me, and gives me window enough to breathe the outer air. . . . Think of all the simple playgoers, the young people, the old honest souls, who are lifted out of their tedious everyday life by your appearance, your voice, your revelation of tragic beauty. Think of what you were yourself when you were a child! Isn't it a fine thing to give to others—perhaps even only to one other—the happiness that others gave you, and to do to them the good that others did to you?"

"Do you really believe that there is one such in the world? I have come to doubt it. . . . Besides, what sort of love do we get from the best of those who love us? How do they see us? They see so badly! They admire you while they degrade you: they get just as much pleasure out of watching any old stager act: they drag you down to the level of the idiots you despise. In their eyes all successful people are exactly the same."

"And yet, when all is told, it is the greatest of all who go down to posterity with the greatest."

"It is only the backward movement of time. Mountains grow taller the farther you go away from them. You see their height better: but you are farther away from them. . . . And besides, who is to tell us who are the greatest? What do you know of the men who have disappeared?"

"Nonsense!" said Christophe. "Even if nobody were to feel what I think and what I am, I think my thoughts and I am what I am just the same. I have my music, I love it, I believe in it: it is the truest thing in my life."

"You are free in your art,—you can do what you like. But what can I do? I am forced to act in the plays they give me, and go on acting until I am sick of it. We are not yet, in France, such beasts of burden as those American actors who play *Rip* or *Robert Macaire* ten thousand times, and for twenty-

five years of their lives go on grinding out and grinding out an idiotic part. But we are on the road to it. Our theaters are so poverty-stricken! The public will only stand genius in infinitesimal doses, sprinkled with mannerisms and fashionable literature. . . . A 'fashionable genius'! Doesn't that make you laugh? . . . What waste of power! Look at what they have made of a Mounet. What has he had to play the whole of his life? Two or three parts that are worth the struggle for life: the *Oedipus* and *Polyeucte*. The rest has been rot! Isn't that enough to disgust one? And just think of all the great and glorious things he might have had to do! . . . Things are no better outside France? What have they made of a Duse? What has her life been given up to? Think of the futile parts she has played?"

"Your real task," said Christophe, "is to force great works of art on the world."

"We should exhaust ourselves in a vain endeavor. It isn't worth it. As soon as a great work of art is brought into the theater it loses its great poetic quality. It becomes a hollow sham. The breath of the public sullies it. The public consists of people living in stifling towns and they have lost all knowledge of the open air, and Nature, and healthy poetry: they must have their poetry theatrical, glittering, painted, reeking.—Ah! And besides . . . besides, even suppose one did succeed . . . no, that would not fill one's life, it would not fill my life. . . ."

"You are still thinking of him."

"Who?"

"You know. That man."

"Yes."

"Even if you could have him and he loved you, confess that you would not be happy even then: you would still find some means of tormenting yourself."

"True. . . . Ah! What is the matter with me? . . . I think I have had too hard a fight. I have fretted too much: I can't ever be calm again: there is always an uneasiness in me, a sort of fever. . . ."

"It must have been in you even before your struggles."

"Possibly. Yes. It was in me when I was a little girl, as far back as I can remember. . . . It was devouring me then."

"What do you want?"

"How do I know? More than I can have."

"I know that," said Christophe. "I was like that when I was a boy."

"Yes, but you have become a man. I shall never be grown-up as long as I live. I am an incomplete creature."

"No one is complete. Happiness lies in knowing one's limitations and loving them."

"I can't do that. I've lost it. Life has cheated me, tricked me, crippled me. And yet I fancy that I could never have been a normal and healthy and beautiful woman without being like the rest of the gang."

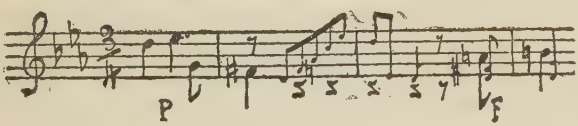
"There's no reason why you shouldn't be all these things. I can see you being like that!"

"Tell me how you can see me."

He described her, in conditions under which she might have developed naturally and harmoniously, and been happy, loved, and loving. And it did her good to hear it. But when he had done, she said:

"No. It is impossible now."

"Well," he said, "in that case you must say to yourself, like dear old Handel when he went blind:



What e-ver is, is right."

He went to the piano and sang it for her. She kissed him and called him her dear, crazy optimist. He did her good. But she did him harm: or at least, she was afraid of him. She had violent fits of despair, and could not conceal them from him: her love made her weak. At night she would try to choke down her agony, he would guess, and beg the beloved creature who was so near and yet so far, to share with him the burden which lay so heavy on her: then she could not hold out any longer, and she would turn weeping to his arms; and he would spend hours in comforting her, kindly, without a spark of anger: but in the long-run her perpetual

restlessness was bound to tell on him. Françoise trembled lest the fever that was in her should infect him. She loved him too much to be able to bear the idea that he should suffer because of her. She was offered an engagement in America, and she accepted it, so as to tear herself away from him. She left him a little humiliated. She was as humiliated as he, in the knowledge that they could not make each other happy!

"My poor dear," she said to him, smiling sadly and tenderly. "Aren't we stupid? We shall never have such a friendship again, never such a glorious opportunity. But it can't be helped, it can't be helped. We are too stupid!"

They looked at each other mournfully and shamefacedly. They laughed to keep themselves from weeping, kissed, and parted with tears in their eyes. Never had they loved so well as when they parted.

And after she was gone he returned to art, his old companion. . . . Oh, the peace of the starry sky!

It was not long before Christophe received a letter from Jacqueline. It was only the third time she had written to him, and her tone was very different from that to which she had accustomed him. She told him how sorry she was not to have seen him for so long, and very nicely invited him to come and see her, unless he wished to hurt two friends who loved him. Christophe was delighted, but not greatly surprised. He had been inclined to think that Jacqueline's unjust disposition towards him would not last. He was fond of quoting a jest of his old grandfather's:

"Sooner or later women have their good moments: one only needs the patience to wait for them."

He went to see Olivier, and was welcomed with delight. Jacqueline was most attentive to him: she avoided the ironical manner which was natural to her, took care not to say anything that might hurt Christophe, showed great interest in what he was doing, and talked intelligently about serious subjects. Christophe thought her transformed. But she was only so to please him. Jacqueline had heard of Christophe's affair with the popular actress, the tale of which had gone the rounds of

Parisian gossip: and Christophe had appeared to her in an altogether new light: she was filled with curiosity about him. When she met him again she found him much more sympathetic. Even his faults seemed to her to be not without attraction. She realized that Christophe had genius, and that it would be worth while to make him love her.

The position between the young couple was no better, but rather worse. Jacqueline was bored, bored, bored: she was bored to death. . . . How utterly lonely a woman is! Except children, nothing can hold her: and children are not enough to hold her forever: for when she is really a woman, and not merely a female, when she has a rich soul and an abounding vitality, she is made for so many things which she cannot accomplish alone and with none to help her! . . . A man is much less lonely, even when he is most alone: he can people the desert with his own thoughts: and when he is lonely in married life he can more easily put up with it, for he notices it less, and can always live in the soliloquy of his own thoughts. And it never occurs to him that the sound of his voice going on imperturbably babbling in the desert, makes the silence more terrible and the desert more frightful for the woman by his side, for whom all words are dead that are not kindled by love. He does not see it: he has not, like the woman, staked his whole life on love: his life has other occupations. . . . What man is there can fill the life of a woman and satisfy her immense desire, the millions of ardent and generous forces that, through the forty thousand years of the life of humanity, have burned to no purpose, as a holocaust offered up to two idols: passing love and motherhood, that sublime fraud, which is refused to thousands of women and never fills more than a few years in the lives of the rest?

Jacqueline was in despair. She had moments of terror that cut through her like swords. She thought:

"Why am I alive? Why was I ever born?" And her heart would ache and throb in agony.

"My God, I am going to die! My God, I am going to die!"

That idea haunted her, obsessed her through the night. She used to dream that she was saying:

"It is 1889."

"No," the answer would come. "It is 1909." And the thought that she was twenty years older than she imagined would make her wretched.

"It will all be over, and I have never lived! What have I done with these twenty years? What have I made of my life?"

She would dream that she was *four* little girls, all four lying in the same room in different beds. They were all of the same figure and the same face: but one was eight, one was fifteen, one was twenty, and the fourth was thirty. There was an epidemic. Three of them had died. The fourth looked at herself in the mirror, and she was filled with terror: she saw herself with the skin drawn tight over her nose, and her features pinched and withered . . . she was going to die too—and then it would be all over. . . .

". . . What have I done with my life? . . ."

She would wake up in tears; and the nightmare would not vanish with the day: the nightmare was real. What had she done with her life? Who had robbed her of it? . . . She would begin to hate Olivier, the innocent accomplice—(innocent! What did it matter if the harm done was the same!)—of the blind law which was crushing her. She would be sorry for it at once, for she was kind of heart: but she was suffering too much: and she could not help wreaking her vengeance on the man who was bound to her and was stifling her life, by making him suffer more than he was indeed suffering. Then she would be more sorry than ever: she would loathe herself and feel that if she did not find some way of escape she would do things even more evil. She groped blindly about to find some way of escape: she clutched at everything like a drowning woman: she tried to take an interest in something, work, or another human being, that might be in some sort her own, her work, a creature belonging to herself. She tried to take up some intellectual work, and learned foreign languages: she began an article, a story: she began to paint, to compose. . . . In vain: she grew tired of everything, and lost heart the very first day. They were too difficult. And then, "books, works of art! What are they? I don't know whether I love them, I don't even know whether they exist. . . ."—Sometimes she

would talk excitedly and laugh with Olivier, and seem to be keenly interested in the things they talked about, or in what he was doing: she would try to bemuse and benumb herself. . . . In vain: suddenly her excitement would collapse, her heart would go icy cold, she would hide away, with never a tear, hardly a breath, utterly prostrate.—She had in some measure succeeded in destroying Olivier. He was growing skeptical and worldly. She did not mind: she found him as weak as herself. Almost every evening they used to go out: and she would go in an agony of suffering and boredom from one fine house to another, and no one would ever guess the feeling that lay behind the irony of her unchanging smile. She was seeking for some one to love her and keep her back from the edge of the abyss. . . . In vain, in vain, in vain. There was nothing but silence in answer to her cry of despair.

She did not love Christophe: she could not bear his rough manner, his painful frankness, and, above all, his indifference. She did not love him: but she had a feeling that he at least was strong,—a rock towering above death. And she tried to clutch hold of the rock, to cling to the swimmer whose head rose above the waves, to cling to him or to drown with him. . . .

Besides, it was not enough for her to have cut her husband off from his friends: now she was driven on to take them from him. Even the best of women sometimes have an instinct which impels them to try and see how far their power goes, and to go beyond it. In that abuse of their power their weakness proves its strength. And when the woman is selfish and vain she finds a malign pleasure in robbing her husband of the friendship of his friends. It is easily done: she has but to use her eyes a little. There is hardly a single man, honorable or otherwise, who is not weak enough to nibble at the bait. Though the friend be never so true and loyal, he may avoid the act, but he will almost always betray his friend in thought. And if the other man sees it, there is an end of their friendship: they no longer see each other with the same eyes.—The woman who plays such a dangerous game generally stops at that and asks no more: she has them both, disunited, at her mercy.

Christophe observed Jacqueline's new graces and charming treatment of himself, but he was not surprised. When he had

an affection for any one he had a naïve way of taking it as a matter of course that the affection should be returned without any ulterior thought. He responded gladly to Jacqueline's advances: he thought her charming, and amused himself thoroughly with her: and he thought so well of her that he was not far from thinking Olivier rather a bungler not to be able to be happy with her and to make her happy.

He went with them for a few days' tour in a motor-car: and he was their guest at the Langeais' country house in Burgundy —an old family mansion which was kept because of its associations, though they hardly ever went there. It was in a lovely situation, in the midst of vineyards and woods: it was very shabby inside, and the windows were loose in their frames: there was a moldy smell in it, a smell of ripe fruit, of cold shadow, and resinous trees warmed by the sun. Living constantly in Jacqueline's company for days together, a sweet insidious feeling crept into Christophe's veins, without in the least disturbing his peace of mind: he took an innocent, though by no means immaterial, delight in seeing her, hearing her, feeling the contact of her beautiful body, and sipping the breath of her mouth. Olivier was a little anxious and uneasy, but said nothing. He suspected nothing: but he was oppressed by a vague uneasiness which he would have been ashamed to admit to himself: by way of punishing himself for it he frequently left them alone together. Jacqueline saw what he was thinking, and was touched by it: she longed to say to him:

"Come, don't be anxious, my dear. I still love you the best."

But she did not say it: and they all three went on drifting: Christophe entirely unconscious, Jacqueline not knowing what she really wanted, and leaving it to chance to tell her, and Olivier alone seeing and feeling what was in the wind, but in the delicacy of vanity and love, refusing to think of it. When the will is silent, instinct speaks: in the absence of the soul, the body goes its own way.

One evening, after dinner, the night seemed to them so lovely —a moonless, starry night,—that they proposed to go for a walk in the garden. Olivier and Christophe left the house. Jacqueline went up to her room to fetch a shawl. She did not come down. Christophe went to look for her, fuming at the eternal

dilatoriness of woman.—(For some time without knowing it he had slipped into playing the part of the husband.)—He heard her coming. The shutters of her room were closed and he could not see.

"Come along, you dilly-dallying madam," cried Christophe gaily. "You'll wear your mirror out if you look at yourself so much."

She did not reply. She had stopped still. Christophe felt that she was in the room: but she did not stir.

"Where are you?" he said.

She did not reply. Christophe said nothing either, and began groping in the dark, and suddenly his heart grew big and began to thump, and he stood still. Near him he could hear Jacqueline breathing lightly. He moved again and stopped once more. She was near him: he knew it, but he could not move. There was silence for a second or two. Suddenly he felt her hands on his, her lips on his. He held her close. They stood still and spoke no word.—Their lips parted; they wrenched away from each other. Jacqueline left the room. Christophe followed her, trembling. His legs shook beneath him. He stopped for a moment to lean against the wall until the tumult in his blood died down. At last he joined them again. Jacqueline was calmly talking to Olivier. They walked on a few yards in front. Christophe followed them in a state of collapse. Olivier stopped to wait for him. Christophe stopped too. Olivier, knowing his friend's temper and the capricious silence in which he would sometimes bar himself, did not persist, and went on walking with Jacqueline. And Christophe followed them mechanically, lagging ten yeards behind them like a dog. When they stopped, he stopped. When they walked on, he walked on. And so they went round the garden and back into the house. Christophe went up to his room and shut himself in. He did not light the lamp. He did not go to bed. He could not think. About the middle of the night he fell asleep, sitting, with his head resting in his arms on the table. He woke up an hour later. He lit a candle, feverishly flung together his papers and belongings, packed his bag, and then flung himself on the bed and slept until dawn. Then he went down with his luggage and left the house. They waited for him all morning, and spent

the day looking for him. Jacqueline hid her furious anger beneath a mask of indifference, and sarcastically pretended to go over her plate. It was not until the following evening that Olivier received a letter from Christophe:

"My dear Old Fellow,

"Don't be angry with me for having gone away like a madman. I am mad, you know. But what can I do? I am what I am. Thanks for your dear hospitality. I enjoyed it much. But, you know, I am not fit to live with other people. I'm not so sure either that I am fit to live. I am only fit to stay in my corner and love people—at a distance: it is wiser so. When I see them at too close quarters, I become misanthropic. And I don't want to be that. I want to love men and women, I want to love you all. Oh! How I long to help you all! If I could only help you to be—to be happy! How gladly would I give all the happiness I may have in exchange! . . . But that is forbidden. One can only show others the way. One cannot go their way in their stead. Each of us must save himself. Save yourself! Save yourselves! I love you.

"CHRISTOPHE.

"My respects to Madame Jeannin."

"Madame Jeannin" read the letter with a smile of contempt and her lips tightly pressed together, and said dryly:

"Well. Follow his advice. Save yourself."

But when Olivier held out his hand for the letter, Jacqueline crumpled it up and flung it down, and two great tears welled up into her eyes. Olivier took her hands.

"What's the matter?" he asked, with some emotion.

"Let me be!" she cried angrily.

She went out. As she reached the door she cried:

"Egoists!"

Christophe had contrived to make enemies of his patrons of the *Grand Journal*, as was only likely. Christophe had been endowed by Heaven with the virtue extolled by Goethe: *ingratitude.*

"The horror of showing gratitude," wrote Goethe ironically, *"is rare, and only appears in remarkable men who have risen from the poorest class, and at every turn have been forced to accept assistance, which is almost invariably poisoned by the churlishness of the benefactor. . . ."*

Christophe was never disposed to think himself obliged to abase himself in return for service rendered, nor—what amounted to the same thing—to surrender his liberty. He did not lend his own benefactions at so much per cent.: he gave them. His benefactors, however, were of a very different way of thinking. Their lofty moral feeling of the duties of their debtors was shocked by Christophe's refusal to write the music for a stupid hymn for an advertising festivity organized by the paper. They made him feel the impropriety of his conduct. Christophe sent them packing. And finally he exasperated them by the flat denial which he gave shortly afterwards to certain statements attributed to him by the paper.

Then they began a campaign against him. They used every possible weapon. They dragged out once more the old petti-fogging engine of war which has always served the impotent against creative men, and, though it has never killed anybody, yet it never fails to have an effect upon the simple-minded and the fools: they accused him of plagiarism. They went and picked out artfully selected and distorted passages from his compositions and from those of various obscure musicians, and they proved that he had stolen his inspiration from others. He was accused of having tried to stifle various young artists. It would have been well enough if he had only had to deal with those whose business it is to bark, with those critics, those mannikins, who climb on the shoulders of a great man and cry:

"I am greater than you!"

But no: men of talent must be wrangling among themselves: each man does his best to make himself intolerable to his colleagues: and yet, as Christophe said, the world was large enough for all of them to be able to work in peace: and each of them in his own talent had quite enough to struggle against.

In Germany he found artists so jealous of him that they were ready to furnish his enemies with weapons against him, and even, if need be, to invent them. He found the same thing

in France. The nationalists of the musical press—several of whom were foreigners,—flung his nationality in his teeth as an insult. Christophe's success had grown widely; and as he had a certain vogue, they pretended that his exaggeration must irritate even those who had no definite views—much more those who had. Among the concert-going public, and among people in society and the writers on the young reviews, Christophe by this time had enthusiastic partisans, who went into ecstasies over everything he did, and were wont to declare that music did not exist before his advent. Some of them explained his music and found philosophic meanings in it which simply astounded him. Others would see in it a musical revolution, an assault on the traditions which Christophe respected more than anybody. It was useless for him to protest. They would have proved to him that he did not know what he had written. They admired themselves by admiring him. And so the campaign against Christophe met with great sympathy among his colleagues, who were exasperated by the "log-rolling" to which he was no party. They did not need to rely on such reasons for not liking his music: most of them felt with regard to it the natural irritation of the man who has no ideas and no difficulty in expressing them according to parrot-like formulæ, with the man who is full of ideas and employs them clumsily in accordance with the apparent disorder of his creative faculty. How often he had had to face the reproach of not being able to write hurled at him by scribes, for whom style consisted in recipes concocted by groups or schools, kitchen molds into which thought was cast! Christophe's best friends, those who did not try to understand him, and were alone in understanding him, because they loved him, simply, for the pleasure he gave them, were obscure auditors who had no voice in the matter. The only man who could have replied vigorously in Christophe's name—Olivier—was at that time out of friends with him, and had apparently forgotten him. Thus Christophe was delivered into the hands of his adversaries and admirers, who vied with each other in doing him harm. He was too disgusted to reply. When he read the pronunciamentos directed against him in the pages of an important newspaper by one of those presumptuous critics who usurp the sovereignty of art with all the in-

solence of ignorance and impunity, he would shrug his shoulders and say:

"Judge me. I judge you. Let us meet in a hundred years!"

But meanwhile the outcry against him took its course: and the public, as usual, gulped down the most fatuous and shameful accusations.

As though his position was not already difficult enough, Christophe chose that moment to quarrel with his publisher. He had no reason at all to complain of Hecht, who published each new work as it was written, and was honest in business. It is true that his honesty did not prevent his making contracts disadvantageous to Christophe: but he kept his contracts. He kept them only too well. One day Christophe was amazed to see a septette of his arranged as a quartette, and a suite of piano pieces clumsily transcribed as a duet, without his having been consulted. He rushed to Hecht's office and thrust the offending music under his nose, and said:

"Do you know these?"

"Of course," said Hecht.

"And you dared . . . you dared tamper with my work without asking my permission! . . ."

"What permission?" said Hecht calmly. "Your compositions are mine."

"Mine, too, I suppose?"

"No," said Hecht quietly.

Christophe started.

"My own work does not belong to me?"

"They are not yours any longer. You sold them to me."

"You're making fun of me! I sold you the paper. Make money out of that if you like. But what is written on it is my life-blood; it is mine."

"You sold me everything. In exchange for these particular pieces, I gave you a sum of three hundred francs in advance of a royalty of thirty centimes on every copy sold of the original edition. Upon that consideration, without any restriction or reserve, you have assigned to me all your rights in your work."

"Even the right to destroy it?"

Hecht shrugged his shoulders, rang the bell, and said to a clerk.

"Bring me M. Krafft's account."

He gravely read Christophe the terms of the contract, which he had signed without reading—from which it appeared, in accordance with the ordinary run of contracts signed by music publishers in those very distant times—"that M. Hecht was the assignee of all the rights, powers, and property of the author, and had the exclusive right to edit, publish, engrave, print, translate, hire, sell to his own profit, in any form he pleased, to have the said work performed at concerts, café-concerts, balls, theaters, etc., and to publish any arrangement of the said work for any instrument and even with words, and also to change the title . . . etc., etc."

"You see," he said, "I am really very moderate."

"Evidently," said Christophe. "I ought to thank you. You might have turned my septette into a café-concert song."

He stopped in horror and held his head in his hands.

"I have sold my soul," he said over and over again.

"You may be sure," said Hecht sarcastically, "that I shall not abuse it."

"And to think," said Christophe, "that your Republic authorizes such practices! You say that man is free. And you put ideas up to public auction."

"You have had your money," said Hecht.

"Thirty pieces of silver. Yes," said Christophe. "Take them back."

He fumbled in his pockets, meaning to give the three hundred francs back to Hecht. But he had nothing like that sum. Hecht smiled a little disdainfully. His smile infuriated Christophe.

"I want my work back," he said. "I will buy them back from you."

"You have no right to do so," said Hecht. "But as I have no desire to keep a man against his will, I am quite ready to give them back to you,—if you are in a position to pay the indemnity stated in the contract."

"I will do it," said Christophe, "even if I have to sell myself."

He accepted without discussion the conditions which Hecht submitted to him a fortnight later. It was an amazing act

of folly, and he bought back his published compositions at a price five times greater than the sum they had brought him in, though it was by no means exorbitant: for it was scrupulously calculated on the basis of the actual profits which had accrued to Hecht. Christophe could not pay, and Hecht had counted on it. He had no intention of squeezing Christophe, of whom he thought more highly, both as a musician and as a man, than of any other young musician: but he wanted to teach him a lesson: for he could not permit his clients to revolt against what was after all within his rights. He had not made the laws: they were those of the time, and they seemed to him equitable. Besides, he was quite sincerely convinced that they were to the benefit of the author as much as to the benefit of the publisher, who knows better than the author how to circulate his work, and is not, like the author, hindered by scruples of a sentimental, respectable order, which are contrary to his real interests. He had made up his mind to help Christophe to succeed, but in his own way, and on condition that Christophe was delivered into his hands, tied hand and foot. He wanted to make him feel that he could not so easily dispense with his services. They made a conditional bargain: if, at the end of six months, Christophe could not manage to pay, his work should become Hecht's absolute property. It was perfectly obvious that Christophe would not be able to collect a quarter of the sum requisite.

However, he stuck to it, said good-by to the rooms which were so full of memories for him, and took a less expensive flat,—selling a number of things, none of which, to his great surprise, were of any value,—getting into debt, and appealing to Mooch's good nature, who, unfortunately, was at that time very badly off and ill, being confined to the house with rheumatism,—trying to find another publisher, and everywhere finding conditions as grasping as Hecht's, and in some cases a point-blank refusal.

It was just at the time when the attack on him in the musical press was at its height. One of the leading Parisian papers was especially implacable: he was like a red rag to a bull to one of the staff who did not sign his name; not a week passed but there appeared in the column headed *Échos* a spiteful para-

graph ridiculing him. The musical critic completed the work of his anonymous colleague: the very smallest pretext served him as an opportunity of expressing his animosity. But that was only the preliminary skirmishing: he promised to return to the subject and deal with it at leisure, and to proceed in due course to execution. They were in no hurry, knowing that a definite accusation has nothing like the same effect on the public as a succession of insinuations repeated persistently. They played with Christophe like a cat with a mouse. The articles were all sent to Christophe, and he despised them, though they made him suffer for all that. However, he said nothing: and, instead of replying—(could he have done so, even if he had wanted to?)—he persisted in the futile and unequal fight with his publisher, provoked by his own vanity. He wasted his time, his strength, his money, and his only weapons, since in the lightness of his heart he was rash enough to deprive himself of the publicity which his music gained through Hecht.

Suddenly there was a complete change. The article announced in the paper never appeared. The insinuations against him were dropped. The campaign stopped short. More than that: a few weeks later, the critic of the paper published incidentally a few eulogistic remarks which seemed to indicate that peace was made. A great publisher at Leipzig wrote to Christophe offering to publish his work, and the contract was signed on terms very advantageous to him. A flattering letter, bearing the seal of the Austrian Embassy, informed Christophe that it was desired to place certain of his compositions on the programs of the galas given at the Embassy. Philomela, whom Christophe was pushing forward, was asked to sing at one of the galas: and, immediately afterwards, she was in great demand in the best houses of the German and Italian colonies in Paris. Christophe himself, who could not get out of going to one of the concerts, was very well received by the Ambassador. However, a very short conversation showed him that his host, who knew very little about music, was absolutely ignorant of his work. How, then, did this sudden interest come about? An invisible hand seemed to be protecting him, removing obstacles, and making the way smooth for him. Christophe made inquiries. The

Ambassador alluded to friends of Christophe—Count and Countess Berény, who were very fond of him. Christophe did not even know their name: and on the night of his visit to the Embassy he had no opportunity of being introduced to them. He did not make any effort to meet them. He was passing through a period of disgust with men, in which he set as little store by his friends as by his enemies: friends and enemies were equally uncertain: they changed with the wind: he would have to learn how to do without them, and say, like the old fellow of the seventeenth century:

"God gave me friends: He took them from me. They have left me. I will leave them and say no more about it."

Since the day when he left Olivier's house, Olivier had given no sign of life: all seemed over between them. Christophe had no mind to form new friendships. He imagined Count and Countess Berény to be like the rest of the snobs who called themselves his friends: and he made no attempt to meet them. He was more inclined to avoid them. He longed to be able to escape from Paris. He felt an urgent desire to take refuge for a few weeks in soothing solitude. If only he could have a few days, only a few days, to refresh himself in his native country! Little by little that idea became a morbid obsession. He wanted once more to see his dear river, his own native sky, the land of his dead kinsfolk. He felt that he must see them. He could not without endangering his freedom: he was still subject to the warrant of arrest issued against him at the time of his flight from Germany. But he felt that he was prepared to go to any lengths if he could return, though it were only for one day.

As good luck would have it, he spoke of his longing to one of his new patrons. A young attaché of the German Embassy, whom he met at an At Home where he was playing, happened to say to him that his country was proud of so fine a musician as himself, to which Christophe replied bitterly:

"Our country is so proud of me that she lets me die on her doorstep rather than open to me."

The young diplomatist asked him to explain the situation, and, a few days later, he came to see Christophe, and said:

"People in high places are interested in you. A very great

personage who alone has the power to suspend the consequence of the sentence which is the cause of your wretchedness has been informed of your position: and he deigns to be touched by it. I don't know how it is that your music can have given him any pleasure: for—(between ourselves)—his taste is not very good: but he is intelligent, and he has a generous heart. Though he cannot, for the moment, remove the sentence passed upon you, the police are willing to shut their eyes, if you care to spend forty-eight hours in your native town to see your family once more. Here is a passport. You must have it endorsed when you arrive and when you leave. Be wary, and do not attract attention to yourself."

Once more Christophe saw his native land. He spent the two days which had been granted him in communion with the earth and those who were beneath it. He visited his mother's grave. The grass was growing over it: but flowers had lately been laid on it. His father and grandfather slept side by side. He sat at their feet. Their grave lay beneath the wall of the cemetery. It was shaded by a chestnut-tree growing in the sunken road on the other side of the low wall, over which he could see the golden crops, softly waving in the warm wind: the sun was shining in his majesty over the drowsy earth: he could hear the cry of the quails in the corn, and the soft murmuring of the cypress-trees above the graves. Christophe was alone with his dreams. His heart was at peace. He sat there with his hands clasping his knees, and his back against the wall, gazing up at the sky. He closed his eyes for a moment. How simple everything was! He felt at home here with his own people. He stayed there near them, as it were hand in hand. The hours slipped by. Towards evening he heard footsteps scrunching on the gravel paths. The custodian passed by and looked at Christophe sitting there. Christophe asked him who had laid the flowers on the grave. The man answered that the farmer's wife from Buir came once or twice a year.

"Lorchen?" said Christophe.

They began to talk.

"You are her son?" said the man.

"She had three," said Christophe.

"I mean the one at Hamburg. The other two turned out badly."

Christophe sat still with his head thrown back a little, and said nothing. The sun was setting.

"I'm going to lock up," said the custodian.

Christophe got up and walked slowly round the cemetery with him. The custodian did the honors of the place. Christophe stopped every now and then to read the names carved on the gravestones. How many of those he knew were of that company! Old Euler,—his son-in-law,—and farther off, the comrades of his childhood, little girls with whom he had played, —and there, a name which stirred his heart: Ada . . . Peace be with all of them. . . .

The fiery rays of the setting sun put a girdle round the calm horizon. Christophe left the cemetery. He went for a long walk through the fields. The stars were peeping. . . .

Next day he came again, and once more spent the afternoon at his vigil. But the fair silent calm of the day before was broken and thrilling with life. His heart sang a careless, happy hymn. He sat on the curb of the grave, and set down the song he heard in pencil in a notebook resting on his knees. So the day passed. It seemed to him that he was working in his old little room, and that his mother was there on the other side of the partition. When he had finished and was ready to go—he had moved a little away from the grave,—he changed his mind and returned, and buried the notebook in the grass under the ivy. A few drops of rain were beginning to fall. Christophe thought:

"It will soon be blotted out. So much the better! . . . For you alone. For nobody else."

And he went to see the river once more, and the familiar streets where so many things were changed. By the gates of the town along the promenade of the old fortifications a little wood of acacia-trees which he had seen planted had overrun the place, and they were stifling the old trees. As he passed along the wall surrounding the Von Kerichs' garden, he recognized the post on which he used to climb when he was a little boy, to look over into the grounds: and he was surprised to see how small the tree, the wall, and the garden had become.

He stopped for a moment before the front gateway. He was going on when a carriage passed him. Mechanically he raised his eyes: and they met those of a young lady, fresh, plump, happy-looking, who stared at him with a puzzled expression. She gave an exclamation of surprise. She ordered the carriage to stop, and said:

"Herr Krafft!"

He stopped.

She said laughingly:

"Minna . . ."

He ran to her almost as nervous as he had been on the day when he first met her.* She was with a tall, stout, bald gentleman, with mustachios brushed up belligerently, whom she introduced as "Herr Reichsgerichtsrat von Brombach"—her husband. She wanted Christophe to go home with her. He tried to excuse himself. But Minna exclaimed:

"No, no. You must come; come and dine with us."

She spoke very loud and very quickly, and, without waiting to be asked, began to tell him her whole life. Christophe was stupefied by her volubility and the noise she made, and only heard half what she said, and stood looking at her. So that was his little Minna. She looked blooming, healthy, well-fed: she had a pretty skin and pink complexion, but her features were rather coarse, and her nose in particular was thick and heavy. Her gestures, manners, pretty little ways, were just the same; but her size was greatly altered.

However, she never stopped talking: she told Christophe all the stories of her past; her whole private history, and how she had come to love her husband and her husband her. Christophe was embarrassed. She was an uncritical optimist, who found everything belonging to herself perfect and superior to other people's possessions—(at least, when she was with other people)—her town, her house, her family, her husband, her cooking, her four children, and herself. She said of her husband in his presence that he was "the most splendid man she had ever seen," and that there was in him "a superhuman force." "The most splendid man" pinched Minna's cheeks laughingly, and assured Christophe that she "was a very remarkable woman."

*See "Jean-Christophe: Morning."

It seemed that *Herr Reichsgerichtsrat* was informed of Christophe's position, and did not exactly know whether he ought to treat him with or without respect, having regard on the one hand to the warrant out against him, and on the other to the august protection which shielded him: he solved the difficulty by affecting a compromise between the two manners. As for Minna, she went on talking. When she had talked her fill about herself to Christophe, she began to talk about him: she battered him with questions as intimate as her answers had been to the supposititious questions which he had never asked. She was delighted to see Christophe again: she knew nothing about his music: but she knew that he was famous: it flattered her to think that she had loved him,—(and that she had rejected him).—She reminded him of it jokingly without much delicacy. She asked him for his autograph for her album. She pestered him with questions about Paris. She showed a mixture of curiosity and contempt for that city. She pretended that she knew it, having been to the Folies-Bergère, the Opéra, Montmartre, and Saint-Cloud. According to her, the women of Paris were all *cocottes,* bad mothers, who had as few children as possible, and did not look after them, and left them at home while they went to the theater or the haunts of pleasant vice. She did not suffer contradiction. In the course of the evening she asked Christophe to play the piano. She thought it charming. But at bottom she admired her husband's playing just as much, for she thought him as superior all round as she was herself.

Christophe had the pleasure of meeting Minna's mother once more, Frau von Kerich. He still had a secret tenderness for her because she had been kind to him. She had not lost any of her old kindness, and she was more natural than Minna: but she still treated Christophe with that ironical affection which used to irritate him in the old days. She had stayed very much where he had left her: she liked the same things; and it did not seem possible for her to admit that any one could do better or differently: she set the Jean-Christophe of the old days against the new Jean-Christophe, and preferred the former.

Of those about her no one had changed in mind save Christophe. The rigidity of the little town, and its narrowness of

outlook, were painful to him. His hosts spent part of the evening in talking scandal about people he did not know. They picked out the ridiculous points of their neighbors, and they decreed everything ridiculous which was different from themselves or their own way of doing things. Their malicious curiosity, which was perpetually occupied with trifles, at last made Christophe feel quite sick. He tried to talk about his life abroad. But at once he became conscious of the impossibility of making them understand French civilization which had made him suffer, and now became dear to him when he stood for it in his own country—the free Latin spirit, whose first law is understanding: to understand as much as possible of life and mind, at the risk of cheapening moral codes. In his hosts, especially in Minna, he found once more the arrogant spirit with which he had come into such violent contact in the old days, though he had almost forgotten it since,—the arrogance of weakness as much as of virtue,—honesty without charity, pluming itself on its virtue, and despising the weaknesses which it could not understand, a worship of the conventional, and a shocked disdain of "irregular" higher things. Minna was calmly and sententiously confident that she was always right. There were no degrees in her judgment of others. For the rest, she never made any attempt to understand them, and was only occupied with herself. Her egoism was thinly coated with a blurred metaphysical tinge. She was always talking of her "ego" and the development of her "ego." She may have been a good woman, one capable of loving. But she loved herself too much. And, above all, her respect for herself was too great. She seemed to be perpetually saying a *Paternoster* and an *Ave* to her "ego." One felt that she would have absolutely and forever ceased to love the man she might have loved the best, if for a single instant he had failed—(even though he were to regret it a thousand times when it was done)—to show a due and proper respect for the dignity of her "ego." . . . Hang your "ego"! Think a little of the second person singular! . . .

However, Christophe did not regard her severely. He who was ordinarily so irritable listened to her chatter with the patience of an archangel. He would not judge her. He surrounded her, as with a halo, with the religious memory of his

childish love, and he kept on trying to find in her the image of his little Minna. It was not impossible to find her in certain of her gestures: the quality of her voice had certain notes which awoke echoes that moved him. He was absorbed in them, and said nothing, and did not listen to what she was saying, though he seemed to listen and always treated her with tender gentle respect. But he found it hard to concentrate his thoughts: she made too much noise, and prevented his hearing Minna. At last he got up, and thought a little wearily:

"Poor little Minna! They would like me to think that you are there, in that comely, stout woman, shouting at the top of her voice, and boring me to death. But I know that it is not so. Come away, Minna. What have we to do with these people?"

He went away, giving them to understand that he would return on the morrow. If he had said that he was going away that very night, they would not have let him go until it was time to catch the train. He had only gone a few yards in the darkness when he recovered the feeling of well-being which he had had before he met the carriage. The memory of his tiresome evening was wiped out as though a wet sponge had been over it: nothing was left of it: it was all drowned in the voice of the Rhine. He walked along its banks by the house where he was born. He had no difficulty in recognizing it. The shutters were closed: all were asleep in it. Christophe stopped in the middle of the road: and it seemed to him that if he knocked at the door, familiar phantoms would open to him. He went into the field round the house, near the river, and came to the place where he used to go and talk to Gottfried in the evening. He sat down. And the old days came to life again. And the dear little girl who had sipped with him the dream of first love was conjured up. Together they lived through their childish tenderness again, with its sweet tears and infinite hopes. And he thought with a simple smile:

"Life has taught me nothing. All my knowledge is vain. . . . All my knowledge is vain. . . . I have still the same old illusions."

How good it is to love and to believe unfailingly! Everything that is touched by love is saved from death.

"Minna, you are with me,—with me, not with *the other,*—Minna, you will never grow old! . . ."

The veiled moon darted from her clouds, and made the silver scales on the river's back gleam in her light. Christophe had a vague feeling that the river never used to pass near the knoll where he was sitting. He went near it. Yes. Beyond the pear-tree there used to be a tongue of sand, a little grassy slope, where he had often played. The river had swept them away: the river was encroaching, lapping at the roots of the pear-tree. Christophe felt a pang at his heart: he went back towards the station. In that direction a new colony—mean houses, sheds half-built, tall factory chimneys—was in course of construction. Christophe thought of the acacia-wood he had seen in the afternoon, and he thought:

"There, too, the river is encroaching. . . ."

The old town, lying asleep in the darkness, with all that it contained of the living and the dead, became even more dear to him: for he felt that a menace hung over it. . . .

Hostis habet muros. . . .

Quick, let us save our women and children! Death is lying in wait for all that we love. Let us hasten to carve the passing face upon eternal bronze. Let us snatch the treasure of our motherland before the flames devour the palace of Priam.

Christophe scrambled into the train as it was going, like a man fleeing before a flood. But, like those men who saved the gods of their city from the wreck, Christophe bore away within his soul the spark of life which had flown upwards from his native land, and the sacred spirit of the past.

Jacqueline and Olivier had come together again for a time. Jacqueline had lost her father, and his death had moved her deeply. In the presence of real misfortune she had felt the wretched folly of her other sorrows: and the tenderness which Olivier showed towards her had revived her affection for him. She was taken back several years to the sad days which had followed on the death of her Aunt Marthe—days which had been followed by the blessed days of love. She told herself that she was ungrateful to life, and that she ought to be thankful that the little it had given her was not taken from her. She

hugged that little to herself now that its worth had been revealed to her. A short absence from Paris, ordered by her doctor to distract her in her grief, travel with Olivier, a sort of pilgrimage to the places where they had loved each other during the first year of her marriage, softened her and filled her with tenderness. In the sadness of seeing once more at the turn of the road the dear face of the love which they thought was gone forever, of seeing it pass and knowing that it would vanish once more,—for how long? perhaps forever?—they clutched at it passionately and desperately. . . .

"Stay, stay with us!"

But they knew that they must lose it. . . .

When Jacqueline returned to Paris she felt a little new life, kindled by love, thrilling in her veins. But love had gone already. The burden which lay so heavy upon her did not bring her into sympathy with Olivier again. She did not feel the joy she expected. She probed herself uneasily. Often when she had been so tormented before she had thought that the coming of a child might be her salvation. The child had come, but it brought no salvation. She felt the human plant rooted in her flesh growing, and sucking up her blood and her life. She would stay for days together lost in thought, listening with vacant eyes, all her being exhausted by the unknown creature that had taken possession of her. She was conscious of a vague buzzing, sweet, lulling, agonizing. She would start suddenly from her torpor—dripping with sweat, shivering, with a spasm of revolt. She fought against the meshes in which Nature had entrapped her. She wished to live, to live freely, and it seemed to her that Nature had tricked her. Then she was ashamed of such thoughts, and seemed monstrous in her own eyes, and asked herself if she were more wicked than, or made differently from, other women. And little by little she would grow calm again, browsing like a tree over the sap, and the dream of the living fruit ripening in her womb. What was it? What was it going to be? . . .

When she heard its first cry to the light, when she saw its pitiable touching little body, her heart melted. In one dazzling moment she knew the glorious joy of motherhood, the mightiest in all the world: in her suffering to have created of her own

flesh a living being, a man. And the great wave of love which moves the universe, caught her whole body, dashed her down, rushed over her, and lifted her up to the heavens. . . . O God, the woman who creates is Thy equal: and Thou knowest no joy like unto hers: for Thou hast not suffered. . . .

Then the wave rolled back, and her soul dropped back into the depths.

Olivier, trembling with emotion, stooped over the child: and, smiling at Jacqueline, he tried to understand what bond of mysterious life there was between themselves and the wretched little creature that was as yet hardly human. Tenderly, with a little feeling of disgust, he just touched its little yellow wrinkled face with his lips. Jacqueline watched him: jealously she pushed him away: she took the child and hugged it to her breast, and covered it with kisses. The child cried and she gave it back, and, with her face turned to the wall, she wept. Olivier came to her and kissed her, and drank her tears: she kissed him too, and forced herself to smile: then she asked to be left alone to rest with the child by her side. . . . Alas! what is to be done when love is dead? The man who gives more than half of himself up to intelligence never loses a strong feeling without preserving a trace, an idea, of it in his brain. He cannot love any more, but he cannot forget that he has loved. But the woman who has loved wholly and without reason, and without reason ceases wholly to love, what can she do? Will? Take refuge in illusions? And what if she be too weak to will, too true to take refuge in illusions? . . .

Jacqueline, lying on her side with her head propped up by her hand, looked down at the child with tender pity. What was he? Whatever he was, he was not entirely hers. He was also something of "the other." And she no longer loved "the other." Poor child! Dear child! She was exasperated with the little creature who was there to bind her to the dead past: and she bent over him and kissed and kissed him. . . .

It is the great misfortune of the women of to-day that they are too free without being free enough. If they were more free, they would seek to form ties, and would find charm and security in them. If they were less free, they would resign themselves

to ties which they would not know how to break: and they would suffer less. But the worst state of all is to have ties which do not bind, and duties from which it is possible to break free.

If Jacqueline had believed that her little house was to be her lot for the whole of her life, she would not have found it so inconvenient and cramped, and she would have devised ways of making it comfortable: she would have ended as she began, by loving it. But she knew that it was possible to leave it, and it stifled her. It was possible for her to revolt, and at last she came to think it her duty to do so.

The present-day moralists are strange creatures. All their qualities have atrophied to the profit of their faculties of observation. They have given up trying to see life, hardly attempt to understand it, and never by any chance WILL it. When they have observed and noted down the facts of human nature, they seem to think their task is at an end, and say:

"That is a fact."

They make no attempt to change it. In their eyes, apparently, the mere fact of existence is a moral virtue. Every sort of weakness seems to have been inserted with a sort of Divine right. The world is growing democratic. Formerly only the King was irresponsible. Nowadays all men, preferably the basest, have that privilege. Admirable counselors! With infinite pains and scrupulous care they set themselves to prove to the weak exactly how weak they are, and that it has been decreed that they should be so and not otherwise from all eternity. What can the weak do but fold their arms? We may think ourselves lucky if they do not admire themselves! By dint of hearing it said over and over again that she is a sick child, a woman soon takes a pride in being so. It is encouraging cowardice, and making it spread. If a man were to amuse himself by telling children complacently that there is an age in adolescence when the soul, not yet having found its balance, is capable of crimes, and suicide, and the worst sort of physical and moral depravity, and were to excuse these things—at once these offenses would spring into being. And even with men it is quite enough to go on telling them that they are not free to make them

cease to be so and descend to the level of the beasts. Tell a woman that she is a responsible being, and mistress of her body and her will, and she will be so. But you moralists are cowards, and take good care not to tell her so: for you have an interest in keeping such knowledge from her! . . .

The unhappy surroundings in which Jacqueline found herself led her astray. Since she had broken with Olivier she had returned to that section of society which she despised when she was a girl. About her and her friends, among married women, there gathered a little group of wealthy young men and women, smart, idle, intelligent, and licentious. They enjoyed absolute liberty of thought and speech, tempered only by the seasoning of wit. They might well have taken for their motto the device of the Rabelaisian abbey:

"Do what thou wilt."

But they bragged a little: for they did not will anything much: they were like the enervated people of Thelema. They would complacently profess the freedom of their instincts: but their instincts were faded and faint; and their profligacy was chiefly cerebral. They delighted in feeling themselves sink into the great piscina of civilization, that warm mud-bath in which human energy, the primeval and vital forces, primitive animalism, and its blossom of faith, will, duties, and passions, are liquefied. Jacqueline's pretty body was steeped in that bath of gelatinous thought. Olivier could do nothing to keep her from it. Besides, he too was touched by the disease of the time: he thought he had no right to tamper with the liberty of another human being: he would not ask anything of the woman he loved that he could not gain through love. And Jacqueline did not in the least resent his non-interference, because she regarded her liberty as her right.

The worst of it was that she went into that amphibious section of society with a wholeness of heart which made anything equivocal repulsive to her: when she believed she gave herself: in the generous ardor of her soul, even in her egoism, she always burned her boats; and, as a result of living with Olivier, she had preserved a moral inability to compromise, which she was apt to apply even in immorality.

Her new friends were too cautious to let others see them as

they were. In theory they paraded absolute liberty with regard to the prejudices of morality and society, though in practice they so contrived their affairs as not to fall out with any one whose acquaintance might be useful to them: they used morality and society, while they betrayed them like unfaithful servants, robbing their masters. They even robbed each other for want of anything better to do, and as a matter of habit. There was more than one of the men who knew that his wife had lovers. The wives were not ignorant of the fact that their husbands had mistresses. They both put up with it. Scandal only begins when one makes a noise about these things. These charming marriages rested on a tacit understanding between partners—between accomplices. But Jacqueline was more frank, and played to win or lose. The first thing was to be sincere. Again, to be sincere. Again and always, to be sincere. Sincerity was also one of the virtues extolled by the ideas of that time. But herein it is proved once again that everything is sound for the sound in heart, while everything is corrupt for the corrupt. How hideous it is sometimes to be sincere! It is a sin for mediocre people to try to look into the depths of themselves. They see their mediocrity: and their vanity always finds something to feed on.

Jacqueline spent her time in looking at herself in her mirror: she saw things in it which it were better she had never seen: for when she saw them she could not take her eyes off them: and instead of struggling against them she watched them grow: they became enormous and in the end captured her eyes and her mind.

The child was not enough to fill her life. She had not been able to nurse it: the baby pined with her. She had to procure a wet nurse. It was a great grief to her at first. . . . Soon it became a solace. The child became splendidly healthy: he grew lustily, and became a fine little fellow, gave no trouble, spent his time in sleeping, and hardly cried at all at night. The nurse—a strapping Nivernaise who had fostered many children, and always had a jealous and embarrassing animal affection for each of them in turn—was like the real mother. Whenever Jacqueline expressed an opinion, the woman went her own way: and if Jacqueline tried to argue, in the end she always

found that she knew nothing at all about it. She had never really recovered from the birth of the child: a slight attack of phlebitis had dragged her down, and as she had to lie still for several weeks she worried and worried: she was feverish, and her mind went on and on indefinitely beating out the same monotonous deluded complaint:

"I have not lived, I have not lived: and now my life is finished. . . ."

For her imagination was fired: she thought herself crippled for life: and there rose in her a dumb, harsh, and bitter rancor, which she did not confess to herself, against the innocent cause of her illness, the child. The feeling is not so rare as is generally believed: but a veil is drawn over it: and even those who feel it are ashamed to submit to it in their inmost hearts. Jacqueline condemned herself: there was a sharp conflict between her egoism and her mother's love. When she saw the child sleeping so happily, she was filled with tenderness: but a moment later she would think bitterly:

"He has killed me."

And she could not suppress a feeling of irritation and revolt against the untroubled sleep of the creature whose happiness she had bought at the price of her suffering. Even after she had recovered, when the child was bigger, the feeling of hostility persisted dimly and obscurely. As she was ashamed of it, she transferred it to Olivier. She went on fancying herself ill: and her perpetual care of her health, her anxieties, which were bolstered up by the doctors, who encouraged the idleness which was the prime cause of it all,—(separation from the child, forced inactivity, absolute isolation, weeks of emptiness spent in lying in bed and being stuffed with food, like a beast being fatted for slaughter),—had ended by concentrating all her thoughts upon herself. The modern way of curing neurasthenia is very strange, being neither more nor less than the substitution of hypertrophy of the ego for a disease of the ego! Why not bleed their egoism, or restore the circulation of the blood from head to heart, if they do not have too much, by some violent, moral reagent!

Jacqueline came out of it physically stronger, plumper, and rejuvenated,—but morally she was more ill than ever. Her months of isolation had broken the last ties of thought which

bound her to Olivier. While she lived with him she was still under the ascendancy of his idealism, for, in spite of all his failings, he remained constant to his faith: she struggled in vain against the bondage in which she was held by a mind more steadfast than her own, against the look which pierced to her very soul, and forced her sometimes to condemn herself, however loath she might be to do so. But as soon as chance had separated her from her husband—as soon as she ceased to feel the weight of his all-seeing love—as soon as she was free—the trusting friendship that used to exist between them was supplanted by a feeling of anger at having broken free, a sort of hatred born of the idea that she had for so long lived beneath the yoke of an affection which she no longer felt.—Who can tell the hidden, implacable, bitter feelings that seethe and ferment in the heart of a creature he loves, by whom he believes that he is loved? Between one day and the next, all is changed. She loved the day before, she seemed to love, she thought she loved. She loves no longer. The man she loved is struck out from her thoughts. She sees suddenly that he is nothing to her: and he does not understand: he has seen nothing of the long travail through which she has passed: he has had no suspicion of the secret hostility towards himself that has been gathering in her: he does not wish to know the reasons for her vengeful hatred. Reasons often remote, complex, and obscure,—some hidden deep in the mysteries of their inmost life,—others arising from injured vanity, secrets of the heart surprised and judged,—others . . . What does she know of them herself? It is some hidden offense committed against her unwittingly, an offense which she will never forgive. It is impossible to find out, and she herself is not very sure what it is: but the offense is marked deep in her flesh: her flesh will never forget it.

To fight against such an appalling stream of disaffection called for a very different type of man from Olivier—one nearer nature, a simpler man and a more supple one not hampered with sentimental scruples, a man of strong instincts, capable, if need be, of actions which his reason would disavow. He lost the fight before ever it began, for he had lost heart: his perception was too clear, and he had long since recognized in Jacqueline a

form of heredity which was stronger than her will, her mother's soul reappearing in her: he saw her falling like a stone down to the depths of the stock from which she sprang: and his weak and clumsy efforts to stay her only accelerated her downfall. He forced himself to be calm. She, from an unconsciously selfish motive, tried to break down his defenses and make him say violent, brutal, boorish things to her so as to have a reason for despising him. If he gave way to anger, she despised him. If at once he were ashamed and became apologetic, she despised him even more. And if he did not, would not, give way to anger—then she hated him. And worst of all was the silence which for days together would rise like a wall between them. A suffocating, crushing, maddening silence which brings even the gentlest creatures to fury and exasperation, and makes them have moments when they feel a savage desire to hurt, to cry out, or make the other cry out. The black silence in which love reaches its final stage of disintegration, and the man and the woman, like the worlds, each following its own orbit, pass onward into the night. . . . They had reached a point at which everything they did, even an attempt to come together again, drove them farther and farther apart. Their life became intolerable. Events were precipitated by an accident.

During the past year Cécile Fleury had often been to the Jeannins'. Olivier had met her at Christophe's: then Jacqueline had invited her to the house; and Cécile went on seeing them even after Christophe had broken with them. Jacqueline had been kind to her: although she was hardly at all musical and thought Cécile a little common, she felt the charm of her singing and her soothing influence. Olivier liked playing with her, and gradually she became a friend of the family. She inspired confidence: when she came into the Jeannins' drawing-room with her honest eyes and her air of health and high spirits, and her rather loud laugh which it was good to hear, it was like a ray of sunlight piercing the mist. She brought a feeling of inexpressible relief and solace to Olivier and Jacqueline. When she was leaving they longed to say to her:

"No. Stay, stay a little while longer, for I am cold!"

During Jacqueline's absence Olivier saw Cécile more often: and he could not help letting her see something of his troubles.

He did it quite unthinkingly, with the heedlessness of a weak and tender creature who is stifling and has need of some one to confide in, with an absolute surrender. Cécile was touched by it: she soothed him with motherly words of comfort. She pitied both of them, and urged Olivier not to lose heart. But whether it was that she was more embarrassed than he by his confidences, or that there was some other reason, she found excuses for going less often to the house. No doubt it seemed to her that she was not acting loyally towards Jacqueline, for she had no right to know her secrets. At least, that was how Olivier interpreted her estrangement: and he agreed with her, for he was sorry that he had spoken. But the estrangement made him feel what Cécile had become to him. He had grown used to sharing his ideas with her, and she was the only creature who could deliver him from the pain he was suffering. He was too much skilled in reading his own feelings to have any doubt as to the name of what he felt for her. He would never have said anything to Cécile. But he could not resist the imperative desire to write down what he felt. For some little time past he had returned to the dangerous habit of communing with his thoughts on paper. He had cured himself of it during the years of love: but now that he found himself alone once more, his inherited mania took possession of him: it was a relief from his sufferings, and it was the artist's need of self-analysis. So he described himself, and set his troubles down in writing, as though he were telling them to Cécile—more freely indeed; since she was never to read it. And as luck would have it the manuscript came into Jacqueline's hands. It happened one day when she was feeling nearer Olivier than she had been for years. As she was clearing out her cupboard she read once more the old love-letters he had sent her: she had been moved to tears by them. Sitting in the shadow of the cupboard, unable to go on with her tidying, she lived through the past once more: and then was filled with sorrow and remorse to think that she had destroyed it. She thought of the grief it must be to Olivier; she had never been able to face the idea of it calmly: she could forget it: but she could not bear to think that he had suffered through her. Her heart ached. She longed to throw herself into his arms and say:

"Oh! Olivier, Olivier, what have we done? We are mad, we are mad! Don't let us ever again hurt each other!"

If only he had come in at that moment!

And it was exactly at that moment that she found his letters to Cécile. . . . It was the end.—Did she think that Olivier had really deceived her? Perhaps. But what does it signify? To her the betrayal was not so much in the act as in the thought and intention. She would have found it easier to forgive the man she loved for taking a mistress than for secretly giving his heart to another woman. And she was right.

"A pretty state of things!" some will say . . . —(They are poor creatures who only suffer from the betrayal of love when it is consummated! . . . When the heart remains faithful, the sordid offenses of the body are of small account. When the heart turns traitor, all the rest is nothing.) . . .

Jacqueline did not for a moment think of regaining Olivier's love. It was too late! She no longer cared for him enough. Or perhaps she cared for him too much. All her trust in him crumbled away, all that was left in her secret heart of her faith and hope in him. She did not tell herself that she had scorned him, and had discouraged him, and driven him to his new love, or that his love was innocent: and that after all we are not masters of ourselves sufficiently to choose whether we will love or not. It never occurred to her to compare his sentimental impulse with her flirtation with Christophe: she did not love Christophe, and so he did not count! In her passionate exaggeration she thought that Olivier was lying to her, and that she was nothing to him. Her last stay had failed her at the moment when she reached out her hand to grasp it. . . . It was the end.

Olivier never knew what she had suffered that day. But when he next saw her he too felt that it was the end.

From that moment on they never spoke to each other except in the presence of strangers. They watched each other like trapped beasts fearfully on their guard. Jeremias Gotthelf somewhere describes, with pitiless simplicity, the grim situation of a husband and a wife who no longer love each other and watch each other, each carefully marking the other's health, looking for symptoms of illness, neither actually thinking of hasten-

ing or even wishing the death of the other, but drifting along in the hope of some sudden accident: and each of them living in the flattering thought of being the healthier of the two. There were moments when both Jacqueline and Olivier almost fancied that such thoughts were in the other's mind. And they were in the mind of neither: but it was bad enough that they should attribute them to each other, as Jacqueline did at night when she would lie feverishly awake and tell herself that her husband was the stronger, and that he was wearing her down gradually, and would soon triumph over her. . . . The monstrous delirium of a crazy heart and brain!—And to think that in their heart of hearts, with all that was best in them, they loved each other! . . .

Olivier bent beneath the weight of it, and made no attempt to fight against it; he held aloof and dropped the rudder of Jacqueline's soul. Left to herself with no pilot to steer her, her freedom turned her dizzy: she needed a master against whom to revolt: if she had no master she had to make one. Then she was the prey of a fixed idea. Till then, in spite of her suffering, she had never dreamed of leaving Olivier. From that time on she thought herself absolved from every tie. She wished to love, before it was too late:—(for, young as she was, she thought herself an old woman).—She loved, she indulged in those imaginary devouring passions, which fasten on the first object they meet, a face seen in a crowd, a reputation, sometimes merely a name, and, having laid hold of it cannot let go, telling the heart that it cannot live without the object of its choice, laying it waste, and completely emptying it of all the memories of the past that filled it; other affections, moral ideas, memories, pride of self, and respect for others. And when the fixed idea dies in its time for want of anything to feed it, after it has consumed everything, who can tell what the new nature may be that will spring from the ruins, a nature often without kindness, without pity, without youth, without illusions, thinking of nothing but devouring life as grass smothers and devours the ruins of monuments!

In this case, as usual, the fixed idea fastened on a creature of the type that most easily tricks the heart. Poor Jacqueline fell in love with a philanderer, a Parisian writer, who was

neither young nor handsome, a man who was heavy, red-faced, dissipated, with bad teeth, absolutely and terribly heartless, whose chief merit was that he was a man of the world and had made a great many women unhappy. She had not even the excuse that she did not know how selfish he was: for he paraded it in his art. He knew perfectly what he was doing: egoism enshrined in art is like a mirror to larks, like a candle to moths. More than one woman in Jacqueline's circle had been caught: quite recently one of her friends, a young, newly-married woman, whom he had had no great difficulty in seducing, had been deserted by him. Their hearts were not broken by it, though they found it hard to conceal their discomfiture from the delight of the gossips. Even those who were most cruelly hurt were much too careful of their interests and their social interests not to keep their perturbation within the bounds of common sense. They made no scandal. Whether they deceived their husbands or their lovers, or whether they were themselves deceived and suffered, it was all done in silence. They were the heroines of scandalous rumors.

But Jacqueline was mad: she was capable not only of doing what she said, but also of saying what she did. She brought into her folly an absolute lack of selfish motive, and an utter disinterestedness. She had the dangerous merit of always being frank with herself and of never shirking the consequences of her own actions. She was a better creature than the people she lived with: and for that reason she did worse. When she loved, when she conceived the idea of adultery, she flung herself into it headlong with desperate frankness.

Madame Arnaud was alone in her room, knitting with the feverish tranquillity with which Penelope must have woven her famous web. Like Penelope, she was waiting for her husband's return. M. Arnaud used to spend whole days away from home. He had classes in the morning and evening. As a rule he came back to lunch. Although he was a slow walker and his school was at the other end of Paris, he forced himself to take the long walk home, not so much from affection, as from habit, and for the sake of economy. But sometimes he was detained by lectures, or he would take advantage of being in the neighborhood of a

library to go and work there. Lucile Arnaud would be left alone in the empty flat. Except for the charwoman who came from eight to ten to do the cleaning, and the tradesmen who came to fetch and bring orders, no one ever rang the bell. She knew nobody in the house now. Christophe had removed, and there were newcomers in the lilac garden. Céline Chabran had married André Elsberger. Élie Elsberger had gone away with his family to Spain, where he had been appointed manager of a mine. Old Weil had lost his wife and hardly ever lived in his flat in Paris. Only Christophe and his friend Cécile had kept up their relations with Lucile Arnaud: but they lived far away, and they were busy and hard at work all day long, so that they often did not come to see her for weeks together. She had nothing outside herself.

She was not bored. She needed very little to keep her interest in things alive: the very smallest daily task was enough, or a tiny plant, whose delicate foliage she would clean with motherly care every morning. She had her quiet gray cat, who had lost something of his manners, as is apt to happen with domestic animals who are loved by their masters: he used to spend the day, like herself, sitting by the fire, or on the table near the lamp watching her fingers as she sewed, and sometimes gazing at her with his strange eyes, which watched her for a moment and then closed again. Even the furniture was company to her. Every piece was like a familiar face. She took a childlike pleasure in looking after them, in gently wiping off the dust which settled on their sides, and in carefully replacing them in their usual corners. She would hold silent conversations with them. She would smile at the fine Louis XVI. round-topped bureau, which was the only piece of old furniture she had. Every day she would feel the same joy in seeing it. She was always absorbed in going over her linen, and she would spend hours standing on a chair, with her hands and arms deep in the great country cupboard, looking and arranging, while the cat, whose curiosity was roused, would spend hours watching her.

But her real happiness came when, after her work was done and she had lunched alone, God knows how—(she never had much of an appetite)—and had gone the necessary errands, and

her day was at an end, she would come in about four and sit by the window or the fire with her work and her cat. Sometimes she would find some excuse for not going out at all; she was glad when she could stay indoors, especially in the winter when it was snowing. She had a horror of the cold, and the wind, and the mud, and the rain, for she was something of a cat herself, very clean, fastidious, and soft. She would rather not eat than go and procure her lunch when the tradespeople forgot to bring it. In that case she would munch a piece of chocolate or some fruit from the sideboard. She was very careful not to let Arnaud know. These were her escapades. Then during the days when the light was dim, and also sometimes on lovely sunny days,—(outside the blue sky would shine, and the noise of the street would buzz round the dark silent rooms; like a sort of mirage enshrouding the soul),—she would sit in her favorite corner, with her feet on her hassock, her knitting in her hands, and go off into day-dreams while her fingers plied the needles. She would have one of her favorite books by her side: as a rule one of those humble, red-backed volumes, a translation of an English novel. She would read very little, hardly more than a chapter a day; and the book would lie on her knees open at the same page for a long time together, or sometimes she would not even open it: she knew it already, and the story of it would be in her dreams. So the long novels of Dickens and Thackeray would be drawn out over weeks, and in her dreams they would become years. They wrapped her about with their tenderness. The people of the present day, who read quickly and carelessly, do not know the marvelous vigor irradiated by those fine books which must be taken in slowly. Madame Arnaud had no doubt that the lives of the characters in the novels were not as real as her own. There were some for whom she would have laid down her life: the tender jealous creature, Lady Castlewood, the woman who loved in silence with her motherly virginal heart, was a sister to her: little Dombey was her own dear little boy: she was Dora, the child-wife, who was dying: she would hold out her arms to all those childlike souls which pass through the world with the honest eyes of purity: and around her there would pass a procession of friendly beggars and harmless eccentrics, all in pursuit of their touchingly preposterous cranks and

whims,—and at their head the fond genius of dear Dickens, laughing and crying together at his own dreams. At such times, when she looked out of the window, she would recognize among the passers-by the beloved or dreaded figure of this or that personage in that imaginary world. She would fancy similar lives, the same lives, being lived behind the walls of the houses. Her dislike for going out came from her dread of that world with its moving mysteries. She saw around her hidden dramas and comedies being played. It was not always an illusion. In her isolation she had come by the gift of mystical intuition which in the eyes of the passers-by can perceive the secrets of their lives of yesterday and to-morrow, which are often unknown to themselves. She mixed up what she actually saw with what she remembered of the novels and distorted it. She felt that she must drown in that immense universe. And she would have to go home to regain her footing.

But what need had she to read or to look at others? She had but to gaze in upon herself. Her pale, dim existence—seeming so when seen from without—was gloriously lit up within. There was abundance and fullness of life in it. There were memories, and treasures, the existence of which lay unsuspected. . . . Had they ever had any reality?—No doubt they were real, since they were real to her. . . . Oh! the wonder of such lowly lives transfigured by the magic wand of dreams!

Madame Arnaud would go back through the years to her childhood: each of the little frail flowers of her vanished hopes sprang silently into life again. . . . Her first childish love for a girl, whose charm had fascinated her at first sight: she loved her with the love which is only possible to those who are infinitely pure: she used to think she would die at the touch of her: she used to long to kiss her feet, to be her little girl, to marry her: the girl had married, had not been happy, had had a child which died, and then she too had died. . . . Another love, when she was about twelve years old, for a little girl of her own age, who tyrannized over her: a fair-haired madcap, gay and imperious, who used to amuse herself by making her cry, and then would devour her with kisses: she laid a thousand romantic plans for their future together: then, suddenly, the girl became a Carmelite nun, without anybody know-

ing why: she was said to be happy. . . . Then there had been a great passion for a man much older than herself. No one had ever known anything about it, not even the object of it. She had given to it a great and ardent devotion and untold wealth of tenderness. . . . Then another passion: this time she was loved. But from a strange timidity, and mistrust of herself, she had not dared to believe that she was loved, or to let the man see that she loved him. And happiness passed without her grasping it. . . . Then . . . But what is the use of telling others what only has a meaning for oneself? So many trivial facts which had assumed a profound significance: a little attention at the hands of a friend: a kind word from Olivier, spoken without his attaching any importance to it: Christophe's kindly visits, and the enchanted world evoked by his music: a glance from a stranger: yes, and even in that excellent woman, so virtuous and pure, certain involuntary infidelities in thought, which made her uneasy and feel ashamed, while she would feebly thrust them aside, though all the same—being so innocent—they brought a little sunshine into her heart. . . . She loved her husband truly, although he was not altogether the husband of her dreams. But he was kind, and one day when he said to her: "My darling wife, you do not know all you are to me; you are my whole life," her heart melted: and that day she felt that she was one with him, wholly and forever, without any possibility of going back on it. Each year brought them closer to each other, and tightened the bond between them. They had shared lovely dreams: of work, traveling, children. What had become of them? . . . Alas! . . . Madame Arnaud was still dreaming them. There was a little boy of whom she had so often and so profoundly dreamed, that she knew him almost as well as though he really existed. She had slowly begotten him through the years, always adorning him with all the most beautiful things she saw, and the things she loved most dearly. . . . Silence! . . .

That was all. It meant worlds to her. There are so many tragedies unknown, even the most intimate, in the depths of the most tranquil and seemingly most ordinary lives! And the greatest tragedy of all perhaps is:—*that nothing happens* in such lives of hope crying for what is their right, their just due

promised, and refused, by Nature—wasting away in passionate anguish—showing nothing of it all to the outside world!

Madame Arnaud, happily for herself, was not only occupied with herself. Her own life filled only a part of her dreams. She lived also in the lives of those she knew, or had known, and put herself in their place: she thought much of Christophe and his friend Cécile. She was thinking of them now. The two women had grown fond of one another. The strange thing was that of the two it was the sturdy Cécile who felt most need to lean on the frail Madame Arnaud. In reality the healthy, high-spirited young woman was not so strong as she seemed to be. She was passing through a crisis. Even the most tranquil hearts are not immune from being taken by surprise. Unknown to herself, a feeling of tenderness had crept into her heart: she refused to admit it at first: but it had grown so that she was forced to see it:—she loved Olivier. His sweet and affectionate disposition, the rather feminine charm of his personality, his weakness and inability to defend himself, had attracted her at once:—(a motherly nature is attracted by the nature which has need of her).—What she had learned subsequently of his marital troubles had inspired her with a dangerous pity for Olivier. No doubt these reasons would not have been enough. Who can say why one human being falls in love with another? Neither counts for anything in the matter, but often it merely happens that a heart which is for the moment off its guard is taken by surprise, and is delivered up to the first affection it may meet on the road.—As soon as she had no room left for doubt as to her state of mind, Cécile bravely struggled to pluck out the barb of a love which she thought wicked and absurd: she suffered for a long time and did not recover. No one would have suspected what was happening to her: she strove valiantly to appear happy. Only Madame Arnaud knew what it must have cost her. Not that Cécile had told her her secret. But she would sometimes come and lay her head on Madame Arnaud's bosom. She would weep a little, without a word, kiss her, and then go away laughing. She adored this friend of hers, in whom, though she seemed so fragile, she felt a moral energy and faith superior to her own. She did not confide in her. But Madame Arnaud could guess

volumes on a hint. The world seemed to her to be a sad misunderstanding. It is impossible to dissolve it. One can only love, have pity, and dream.

And when the swarm of her dreams buzzed too loudly, when her thoughts stopped, she would go to her piano and let her hands fall lightly on the keys, at random, and play softly to wreathe the mirage of life about with the subdued light of music. . . .

But the good little creature would not forget to perform her everyday duties: and when Arnaud came home he would find the lamp lit, the supper ready, and his wife's pale, smiling face waiting for him. And he would have no idea of the universe in which she had been living.

The great difficulty was to keep the two lives going side by side without their clashing: her everyday life and that other, the great life of the mind, with its far-flung horizons. It was not always easy. Fortunately Arnaud also lived to some extent in an imaginary life, in books, and works of art, the eternal fire of which fed the flickering flames of his soul. But during the last few years he had become more and more preoccupied with the petty annoyances of his profession, injustice and favoritism, and friction with his colleagues or his pupils: he was embittered: he began to talk politics, and to inveigh against the Government and the Jews: and he made Dreyfus responsible for his disappointments at the university. His mood of soreness infected Madame Arnaud a little. She was at an age when her vital force was upset and uneasy, groping for balance. There were great gaps in her thoughts. For a time they both lost touch with life, and their reason for existence: for they had nothing to which to bind their spider's web, which was left hanging in the void. Though the support of reality be never so weak, yet for dreams there must be one. They had no sort of support. They could not contrive any means of propping each other up. Instead of helping her, he clung to her. And she knew perfectly well that she was not strong enough to hold him up, for she could not even support herself. Only a miracle could save her. She prayed for it to come. It came from the depths of her soul. In her solitary pious heart Madame Arnaud felt

the irony of the sublime and absurd hunger for creation in spite of everything, the need of weaving her web in spite of everything, through space, for the joy of weaving, leaving it to the wind, the breath of God, to carry her whithersoever it was ordained that she should go. And the breath of God gave her a new hold on life, and found her an invisible support. Then the husband and wife both set patiently to work once more to weave the magnificent and vain web of their dreams, a web fashioned of their purest suffering and their blood.

Madame Arnaud was alone in her room. . . . It was near evening.

The door-bell rang. Madame Arnaud, roused from her reverie before the usual time, started and trembled. She carefully arranged her work and went to open the dor. Christophe came in. He was in a great state of emotion. She took his hands affectionately.

"What is it, my dear?" she asked.

"Ah!" he said. "Olivier has come back."

"Come back?"

"He came this morning and said: 'Christophe, help me!' I embraced him. He wept. He told me: I have nothing but you now. She has gone."

Madame Arnaud gasped, and clasped her hands and said:

"Poor things!"

"She has gone," said Christophe. "Gone with her lover."

"And her child?" asked Madame Arnaud.

"Husband, child—she has left everything."

"Poor thing!" said Madame Arnaud again.

"He loved her," said Christophe. "He loved her, and her alone. He will never recover from the blow. He keeps on saying: 'Christophe, she has betrayed me. . . . My dearest friend has betrayed me.' It is no good my saying to him, 'Since she has betrayed you, she cannot have been your friend. She is your enemy. Forget her or kill her!'"

"Oh! Christophe, what are you saying! It is too horrible!"

'Yes, I know. You all think it barbaric and prehistoric to kill! It is jolly to hear these Parisians protesting against the brutal instincts which urge the male to kill the female if she

deceives him, and preaching indulgence and reason! They're splendid apostles! It is a fine thing to see the pack of mongrel dogs waxing wrath against the return to animalism. After outraging life, after having robbed it of its worth, they surround it with religious worship. . . . What! That heartless, dishonorable, meaningless life, the mere physical act of breathing, the beating of the blood in a scrap of flesh, these are the things which they hold worthy of respect! They are never done with their niceness about the flesh: it is a crime to touch it. You may kill the soul if you like, but the body is sacred. . . ."

"The murderers of the soul are the worst of all: but one crime is no excuse for another. You know that."

"I know it. Yes. You are right. I did not think what I was saying. . . . Who knows? I should do it, perhaps."

"No. You are unfair to yourself. You are so kind."

"If I am roused to passion, I am as cruel as the rest. You see how I had lost control of myself! . . . But when you see a friend brought to tears, how can you not hate the person who has caused them? And how can one be too hard on a woman who leaves her child to run after her lover?"

"Don't talk like that, Christophe. You don't know."

"What! You defend her?"

"I pity her, too."

"I pity those who suffer. Not those who cause suffering."

"Well! Do you think she hasn't suffered too? Do you think she has left her child and wrecked her life out of lightness of heart? For her life is wrecked too. I hardly know her, Christophe. I have only seen her a few times, and that only in passing: she never said a friendly word to me, she was not in sympathy with me. And yet I know her better than you. I am sure she is not a bad woman. Poor child! I can guess what she has had to go through. . . ."

"You. . . . You whose life is so worthy and so right and sensible! . . ."

"Yes, Christophe, I. You do not know. You are kind, but you are a man and, like all men, you are hard, in spite of your kindness—a man hard and set against everything which is not in and of yourself. You have no real knowledge of the women who live with you. You love them, after your fashion;

but you never take the trouble to understand them. You are so easily satisfied with yourselves! You are quite sure that you know us. . . . Alas! If you knew how we suffer sometimes when we see, not that you do not love us, but how you love us, and that that is all we are to those we love the best! There are moments, Christophe, when we clench our fists so that the nails dig into our hands to keep ourselves from crying to you: 'Oh! Do not love us, do not love us! Anything rather than love us like that!'. . . Do you know the saying of a poet: 'Even in her home, among her children, surrounded with sham honors, a woman endures a scorn a thousand times harder to bear than the most utter misery'? Think of that, Christophe. They are terrible words."

"What you say has upset me. I don't rightly understand. But I am beginning to see. . . . Then, you yourself. . . ."

"I have been through all these torments."

"Is it possible? . . . But, even so, you will never make me believe that you would have done the same as that woman."

"I have no child, Christophe. I do not know what I should have done in her place."

"No. That is impossible. I believe in you. I respect you too much. I swear that you could not."

"Swear nothing! I have been very near doing what she has done. . . . It hurts me to destroy the good idea you had of me. But you must learn to know us a little if you do not want to be unjust. Yes, I have been within an ace of just such an act of folly. And you yourself had something to do with my not going on with it. It was two years ago. I was going through a period of terrible depression, that seemed to be eating my life away. I kept on telling myself that I was no use in the world, that nobody needed me, that even my husband could do without me, that I had lived for nothing. . . . I was on the very point of running away, to do Heaven knows what! I went up to your room. . . . Do you remember? . . . You did not understand why I came. I came to say good-bye to you. . . . And then, I don't know what happened, I can't remember exactly . . . but I know that something you said . . . (though you had no idea of it . . .) . . . was like a flash of light to me. . . . Perhaps it was not what you

said. . . . Perhaps it was only a matter of opportunity; at that moment the least thing was enough to make or mar me. . . . When I left you I went back to my own room, locked myself in, and wept the whole day through. . . . I was better after that: the crisis had passed."

"And now," asked Christophe, "you are sorry?"

"Now?" she said. "Ah! If I had been so mad as to do it I should have been at the bottom of the Seine long ago. I could not have borne the shame of it, and the injury I should have done to my poor husband."

"Then you are happy?"

"Yes. As happy as one can be in this life. It is so rare for two people to understand each other, and respect each other, and know that they are sure of each other, not merely with a simple lover's belief, which is often an illusion, but as the result of years passed together, gray, dull, commonplace years even—especially with the memory of the dangers through which they have passed together. And as they grow older their trust grows greater and finer."

She stopped and blushed suddenly.

"Oh, Heavens! How could I tell you that? . . . What have I done? . . . Forget it, Christophe, I beg of you. No one must know."

"You need not be afraid," said Christophe, pressing her hand warmly. "It shall be sacred to me."

Madame Arnaud was unhappy at what she had said, and turned away for a moment.

Then she went on:

"I ought not to have told you. . . . But, you see, I wanted to show you that even in the closest and best marriages, even for the women . . . whom you respect, Christophe . . . there are times, not only of aberration, as you say, but of real, intolerable suffering, which may drive them to madness, and wreck at least one life, if not two. You must not be too hard. Men and women make each other suffer terribly even when they love each other dearly."

"Must they, then, live alone and apart?"

"That is even worse for us. The life of a woman who has to live alone, and fight like men (and often against men), is

a terrible thing in a society which is not ready for the idea of it, and is, in a great measure, hostile to it. . . . "

She stopped again, leaning forward a little, with her eyes fixed on the fire in the grate; then she went on softly, in a rather hushed tone, hesitating every now and then, stopping, and then going on:

"And yet it is not our fault when a woman lives like that, she does not do so from caprice, but because she is forced to do so; she has to earn her living and learn how to do without a man, since men will have nothing to do with her if she is poor. She is condemned to solitude without having any of its advantages, for in France she cannot, like a man, enjoy her independence, even in the most innocent way, without provoking scandal: everything is forbidden her. I have a friend who is a school-mistress in the provinces. If she were shut up in an airless prison she could not be more lonely and more stifled. The middle-classes close their doors to women who struggle to earn their living by their work; they are suspected and contemned; their smallest actions are spied upon and turned to evil. The masters at the boys' school shun them, either because they are afraid of the tittle-tattle of the town, or from a secret hostility, or from shyness, and because they are in the habit of frequenting cafés and consorting with low women, or because they are too tired after the day's work and have a dislike, as a result of their work, for intellectual women. And the women themselves cannot bear each other, especially if they are compelled to live together in the school. The head-mistress is often a woman absolutely incapable of understanding young creatures with a need of affection, who lose heart during the first few years of such a barren trade and such inhuman solitude; she leaves them with their secret agony and makes no attempt to help them; she is inclined to think that they are only vain and haughty. There is no one to take an interest in them. Having neither fortune nor influence, they cannot marry. Their hours of work are so many as to leave them no time in which to create an intellectual life which might bind them together and give them some comfort. When such an existence is not supported by an exceptional religious or moral feeling,—(I might even say abnormal and morbid; for such absolute self-sacrifice is

not natural),—it is a living death. . . .—In default of intellectual work, what resources does charity offer to women? What great disappointments it holds out for those women who are too sincere to be satisfied with official or polite charity, philanthropic twaddle, the odious mixture of frivolity, beneficence, and bureaucracy, the trick of dabbling in poverty in the intervals of flirtation! And if one of them in disgust has the incredible audacity to venture out alone among the poor or the wretched, whose life she only knows by hearsay, think of what she will see! Sights almost beyond bearing! It is a very hell. What can she do to help them? She is lost, drowned in such a sea of misfortune. However, she struggles on, she tries hard to save a few of the poor wretches, she wears herself out for them, and drowns with them. She is lucky if she succeeds in saving one or two of them! But who is there to rescue her? Who ever dreams of going to her aid? For she, too, suffers, both with her own and the suffering of others: the more faith she gives, the less she has for herself; all these poor wretches cling desperately to her, and she has nothing with which to stay herself. No one holds out a hand to her. And sometimes she is stoned. . . . You knew, Christophe, the splendid woman who gave herself to the humblest and most meritorious charitable work; she took pity on the street prostitutes who had just been brought to child-bed, the wretched women with whom the Public Aid would have nothing to do, or who were afraid of the Public Aid; she tried to cure them physically and morally, to look after them and their children, to wake in them the mother-feeling, to give them new homes and a life of honest work. She taxed her strength to the utmost in her grim labors, so full of disappointment and bitterness—(so few are saved, so few wish to be saved! And think of all the babies who die! Poor innocent little babies, condemned in the very hour of their birth! . . .).—That woman who had taken upon herself the sorrows of others, the blameless creature who of her own free will expiated the crimes of human selfishness—how do you think she was judged, Christophe? The evil-minded public accused her of making money out of her work, and even of making money out of the poor women she protected. She had to leave the neighborhood, and

go away, utterly downhearted. . . .—You cannot conceive the cruelty of the struggles which independent women have to maintain against the society of to-day, a conservative, heartless society, which is dying and expends what little energy it has left in preventing others from living."

"My dear creature, it is not only the lot of women. We all know these struggles. And I know the refuge."

"What is it?"

"Art."

"All very well for you, but not for us. And even among men, how many are there who can take advantage of it?"

"Look at your friend Cécile. She is happy."

"How do you know? Ah! You have jumped to conclusions! Because she puts a brave face on it, because she does not stop to think of things that make her sad, because she conceals them from others, you say that she is happy! Yes. She is happy to be well and strong, and to be able to fight. But you know nothing of her struggles. Do you think she was made for that deceptive life of art? Art! Just think of the poor women who long for the glory of being able to write or play or sing as the very summit of happiness! Their lives must be bare indeed, and they must be so hard pressed that they can find no affection to which to turn! Art! What have we to do with art, if we have all the rest with it? There is only one thing in the world which can make a woman forget everything else, everything else: and that is the child."

"And when she has a child, you see, even that is not enough."

"Yes. Not always. . . . Women are not very happy. It is difficult to be a woman. Much more difficult than to be a man. You men never realize that enough. You can be absorbed in an intellectual passion or some outside activity. You mutilate yourselves, but you are the happier for it. A healthy woman cannot do that without suffering for it. It is inhuman to stifle a part of yourself. When we women are happy in one way, we regret that we are not happy in another. We have several souls. You men have but one, a more vigorous soul, which is often brutal and even monstrous. I admire you.

But do not be too selfish. You are very selfish without knowing it. You hurt us often, without knowing it."

"What are we to do? It is not our fault."

"No, it is not your fault, my dear Christophe. It is not your fault, nor is it ours. The truth is, you know, that life is not a simple thing. They say that there we only need to live naturally. But which of us is natural?"

"True. Nothing is natural in our way of living. Celibacy is not natural. Nor is marriage. And free love delivers the weak up to the rapaciousness of the strong. Even our society is not a natural thing: we have manufactured it. It is said that man is a sociable animal. What nonsense! He was forced to be so to live. He has made himself sociable for the purposes of utility, and self-defence, and pleasure, and the rise to greatness. His necessity has led him to subscribe to certain compacts. Nature kicks against the constraint and avenges herself. Nature was not made for us. We try to quell her. It is a struggle, and it is not surprising that we are often beaten. How are we to win through it? By being strong."

"By being kind."

"Heavens! To be kind, to pluck off one's armor of selfishness, to breathe, to love life, light, one's humble work, the little corner of the earth in which one's roots are spread. And if one cannot have breadth to try to make up for it in height and depth, like a tree in a cramped space growing upward to the sun."

"Yes. And first of all to love one another. If a man would feel more that he is the brother of a woman, and not only her prey, or that she must be his! If both would shed their vanity and each think a little less of themselves, and a little more of the other! . . . We are weak: help us. Let us not say to those who have fallen: 'I do not know you.' But: 'Courage, friend. We'll pull through.'"

They sat there in silence by the hearth, with the cat between them, all three still, lost in thought, gazing at the fire. It was nearly out; but a little flame flickered up, and with its wing lightly touched Madame Arnaud's delicate face, which was suffused with the rosy light of an inward exaltation which

was strange to her. She was amazed at herself for having been so open. She had never said so much before, and she would never say so much again.

She laid her hand on Christophe's and said:

"What will you do with the child?"

She had been thinking of that from the outset. She talked and talked and became another woman, excited and exalted. But she was thinking of that and that only. With Christophe's first words she had woven a romance in her heart. She thought of the child left by its mother, of the happiness of bringing it up, and weaving about its little soul the web of her dreams and her love. And she thought:

"No. It is wicked of me: I ought not to rejoice in the misfortunes of others."

But the idea was too strong for her. She went on talking and talking, and her silent heart was flooded with hope.

Christophe said:

"Yes, of course we have thought it over. Poor child! Both Olivier and I are incapable of rearing it. It needs a woman's care. I thought perhaps one of our friends would like to help us. . . ."

Madame Arnaud could hardly breathe.

Christophe said:

"I wanted to talk to you about it. And then Cécile came in just as we were talking about it. When she heard of our difficulty, when she saw the child, she was so moved, she seemed so delighted, she said: 'Christophe . . .'"

Madame Arnaud's heart stopped; she did not hear what else he said: there was a mist in front of her eyes. She was fain to cry out:

"No, no. Give him to me. . . ."

Christophe went on speaking. She did not hear what he was saying. But she controlled herself. She thought of what Cécile had told her, and she thought:

"Her need is greater than mine. I have my dear Arnaud . . . and . . . and everything . . . and besides, I am older. . . ."

And she smiled and said:

"It is well."

But the flame in the dying fire had flickered out: so too

had the rosy light in her face. And her dear tired face wore only its usual expression of kindness and resignation.

"My wife has betrayed me."

Olivier was crushed by the weight of that idea. In vain did Christophe try affectionately to shake him out of his torpor.

"What would you?" he said. "The treachery of a friend is an everyday evil like illness, or poverty, or fighting the fools. We have to be armed against it. It is a poor sort of man that cannot bear up against it."

"That's just what I am. I'm not proud of it . . . a poor sort of man: yes: a man who needs tenderness, and dies if it is taken from him."

"Your life is not finished: there are other people to love."

"I can't believe in any one. There are none who can be friends."

"Olivier!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't doubt you, although there are moments when I doubt everybody—myself included. . . . But you are strong: you don't need anybody: you can do without me."

"So can she—even better."

"You are cruel, Christophe."

"My dear fellow. I'm being brutal to you just to make you lash out. Good Lord! It is perfectly shameful of you to sacrifice those who love you, and your life, to a woman who doesn't care for you."

"What do I care for those who love me? I love her."

"Work. Your old interests . . ."

". . . Don't interest me any longer. I'm sick of it all. I seem to have passed out of life altogether. Everything seems so far away. . . . I see, but I don't understand. . . . And to think that there are men who never grow tired of winding up their clockwork every day, and doing their dull work, and their newspaper discussions, and their wretched pursuit of pleasure, men who can be violently for or against a Government, or a book, or an actress. . . . Oh! I feel so old! I feel nothing, neither hatred, nor rancor against any-

body. I'm bored with everything. I feel that there is nothing in the world. . . . Write? Why write? Who understands you? I used to write only for one person: everything that I did was for her. . . . There is nothing left: I'm worn out, Christophe, fagged out. I want to sleep."

"Sleep, then, old fellow. I'll sit by you."

But sleep was the last thing that Olivier could have. Ah! if only a sufferer could sleep for months until his sorrow is no more and has no part in his new self; if only he could sleep until he became a new man! But that gift can never be his: and he would not wish to have it. The worst suffering of all were to be deprived of suffering. Olivier was like a man in a fever, feeding on his fever: a real fever which came in regular waves, being at its height in the evening when the light began to fade. And the rest of the day it left him shattered, intoxicated by love, devoured by memory, turning the same thought over and over like an idiot chewing the same mouthful again and again without being able to swallow it, with all the forces of his brain paralyzed, grinding slowly on with the one fixed idea.

He could not, like Christophe, resort to cursing his injuries and honestly blackguarding the woman who had dealt them. He was more clear-sighted and just, and he knew that he had his share of the responsibility, and that he was not the only one to suffer: Jacqueline also was a victim:—she was his victim. She had trusted herself to him: how had he dealt with his trust? If he was not strong enough to make her happy, why had he bound her to himself? She was within her rights in breaking the ties which chafed her.

"It is not her fault," he thought. "It is mine. I have not loved her well. And yet I loved her truly. But I did not know how to love since I did not know how to win her love."

So he blamed himself: and perhaps he was right. But it is not much use to hold an inquest on the past: if it were all to do again, it would be just the same, inquiry or no inquiry: and such probing stands in the way of life. The strong man is he who forgets the injury that has been done him—and also, alas! that which he has done himself, as soon

as he is sure that he cannot make it good. But no man is strong from reason, but from passion. Love and passion are like distant relations: they rarely go together. Olivier loved: he was only strong against himself. In the passive state into which he had fallen he was an easy prey to every kind of illness. Influenza, bronchitis, pneumonia, pounced on him. He was ill for part of the summer. With Madame Arnaud's assistance, Christophe nursed him devotedly: and they succeeded in checking his illness. But against his moral illness they could do nothing: and little by little they were overcome by the depression and utter weariness of his perpetual melancholy, and were forced to run away from it.

Illness plunges a man into a strange solitude. Men have an instinctive horror of it. It is as though they were afraid lest it should be contagious: and at the very least it is boring, and they run away from it. How few people there are who can forgive the sufferings of others! It is always the old story of the friends of Job. Eliphaz the Temanite accuses Job of impatience. Bildad the Shuhite declares that Job's afflictions are the punishment of his sins. Sophar of Naamath charges him with presumption. *"Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justifieth himself, rather than God."*—Few men are really sorrowful. Many are called, but few are chosen. Olivier was one of these. As a misanthrope once observed: "He seemed to like being maltreated. There is nothing to be gained by playing the part of the unhappy man. You only make yourself detested."

Olivier could not tell even his most intimate friends what he felt. He saw that it bored them. Even his friend Christophe lost patience with such tenacious and importunate grief. He knew that he was clumsy and awkward in remedying it. If the truth must be told, Christophe, whose heart was generous, Christophe who had gone through much suffering on his own account, could not feel the suffering of his friend. Such is the infirmity of human nature. You may be kind, full of pity, understanding, and you may have suffered a thousand deaths, but you cannot feel the pain of your friend if

he has but a toothache. If illness goes on for a long time, there is a temptation to think that the sufferer is exaggerating his complaint. How much more, then, must this be so when the illness is invisible and seated in the very depths of the soul! A man who is outside it all cannot help being irritated by seeing his friend moaning and groaning about a feeling which does not concern him in the very least. And in the end he says: by way of appeasing his conscience:

"What can I do? He won't listen to reason, whatever I say."

To reason: true. One can only help by loving the sufferer, by loving him unreasoningly, without trying to convince him, without trying to cure him, but just by loving and pitying him. Love is the only balm for the wounds of love. But love is not inexhaustible even with those who love the best: they have only a limited store of it. When the sick man's friends have once written all the words of affection they can find, when they have done what they consider their duty, they withdraw prudently, and avoid him like a criminal. And as they feel a certain secret shame that they can help him so little, they help him less and less: they try to let him forget them and to forget themselves. And if the sick man persists in his misfortune and, indiscreetly, an echo of it penetrates to their ears, then they judge harshly his want of courage and inability to bear up against his trials. And if he succumbs, it is very certain that lurking beneath their really genuine pity lies this disdainful under-thought:

"Poor devil! I had a better opinion of him."

Amid such universal selfishness what a marvelous amount of good can be done by a simple word of tenderness, a delicate attention, a look of pity and love! Then the sick man feels the worth of kindness. And how poor is all the rest compared with that! . . . Kindness brought Olivier nearer to Madame Arnaud than anybody else, even his friend Christophe. However, Christophe most meritoriously forced himself to be patient, and in his affection for him, concealed what he really thought of him. But Olivier, with his natural keenness of perception sharpened by suffering, saw the conflict in his friend, and what a burden he was upon him with his un-

ending sorrow. It was enough to make him turn from Christophe, and fill him with a desire to cry:

"Go away. Go."

So unhappiness often divides loving hearts. As the winnower sorts the grain, so sorrow sets on one side those who have the will to live, and on the other those who wish to die. It is the terrible law of life, which is stronger than love! The mother who sees her son dying, the friend who sees his friend drowning,—if they cannot save them, they do not cease their efforts to save themselves: they do not die with them. And yet, they love them a thousand times better than their lives. . . .

In spite of his great love, there were moments when Christophe had to leave Olivier. He was too strong, too healthy, to be able to live and breathe in such airless sorrow. He was mightily ashamed of himself! He would feel cold and dead at heart to think that he could do nothing for his friend: and as he needed to avenge himself on some one, he visited his wrath upon Jacqueline. In spite of Madame Arnaud's words of understanding and sympathy, he still judged her harshly, as a young, ardent, and whole-hearted man must, until he has learned enough of life to have pity on its weaknesses.

He would go and see Cécile and the child who had been entrusted to her. That refreshed his soul. Cécile was transfigured by her borrowed motherhood: she seemed to be young again, and happy, more refined and tender. Jacqueline's departure had not given her any unavowed hope of happiness. She knew that the memory of Jacqueline must leave her farther away from Olivier than her presence. Besides, the little puff of wind that had set her longing had passed: it had been a moment of crisis, which the sight of poor Jacqueline's frenzied mistake had helped to dissipate: she had returned to her normal tranquillity, and she could not rightly understand what it was that had dragged her out of it. All that was best in her need of love was satisfied by her love for the child. With the marvelous power of illusion—of intuition—of women, she found the man she loved in the little child: in that way she could have him, weak and utterly dependent, utterly her own: he belonged to her: and she could love him, love him passionately, with a love as pure as the heart of the

innocent child, and his clear blue eyes, like little drops of light. . . . True, there was mingled with her tenderness a regretful melancholy. Ah! It could never be the same thing as a child of her own blood! . . . But it was good, all the same.

Christophe now regarded Cécile with very different eyes. He remembered an ironic saying of Françoise Oudon:

"How is it that you and Philomela, who would do so well as husband and wife, are not in love with each other?"

But Françoise knew the reason better than Christophe: it is very rarely that a man like Christophe loves those who can do him good: rather he is apt to love those who can do him harm. Opposites meet: his nature seeks its own destruction, and goes to the burning and intense life rather than to the cautious life which is sparing of itself. And a man like Christophe is quite right, for his law is not to live as long as possible, but as mightily as possible.

However, Christophe, having less penetration than Françoise, said to himself that love is a blind, inhuman force, throwing those together who cannot bear with each other. Love joins those together who are like each other. And what love inspires is very small compared with what it destroys. If it be happy it dissolves the will. If unhappy it breaks hearts. What good does it ever do?

And as he thus maligned love he saw its ironic, tender smile saying to him:

"Ingrate!"

Christophe had been unable to get out of going to one of the At Homes given at the Austrian Embassy. Philomela was to sing *lieder* by Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Christophe. She was glad of her success and that of her friend, who was now made much of by a certain set. Christophe's name was gaining ground from day to day, even with the great public: it had become impossible for the Lévy-Cœurs to ignore him any longer. His works were played at concerts: and he had had an opera accepted by the Opéra Comique. The sympathies of some person unknown were enlisted on his behalf. The mysterious friend, who had more than once helped him, was still forwarding his claims. More than once Christophe had been

conscious of that fondly helping hand in everything he did: some one was watching over him and jealously concealing his or her identity. Christophe had tried to discover it: but it seemed as though his friend were piqued by his not having attempted sooner to find out who he was, and he remained unapproachable. Besides, Christophe was absorbed by other preoccupations: he was thinking of Olivier, he was thinking of Françoise: that very morning he had just read in the paper that she was lying seriously ill at San Francisco: he imagined her alone in a strange city, in a hotel bedroom, refusing to see anybody, or to write to her friends, clenching her teeth, and waiting, alone, for death.

He was obsessed by these ideas and avoided the company present: and he withdrew into a little room apart: he stood leaning against the wall in a recess that was half in darkness, behind a curtain of evergreens and flowers, listening to Philomela's lovely voice, with its elegiac warmth, singing *The Lime-tree* of Schubert: and the pure music called up sad memories. Facing him on the wall was a large mirror which reflected the lights and the life of the next room. He did not see it: he was gazing in upon himself: and the mist of tears swam before his eyes. . . . Suddenly, like Schubert's rustling tree, he began to tremble for no reason. He stood so for a few seconds, very pale, unable to move. Then the veil fell from before his eyes, and he saw in the mirror in front of him his "friend," gazing at him. . . . His "friend"? Who was she? He knew nothing save that she was his friend and that he knew her: and he stood leaning against the wall, his eyes meeting hers, and he trembled. She smiled. He could not see the lines of her face or her body, nor the expression in her eyes, nor whether she was tall or short, nor how she was dressed. Only one thing he saw: the divine goodness of her smile of compassion.

And suddenly her smile conjured up in Christophe an old forgotten memory of his early childhood. . . . He was six or seven, at school, unhappy: he had just been humiliated and bullied by some older, stronger boys, and they were all jeering at him, and the master had punished him unjustly: he was crouching in a corner, utterly forlorn, while the others were

playing: and he wept softly. There was a sad-faced little girl who was not playing with the others,—(he could see her now, though he had never thought of her since then; she was short, and had a big head, fair, almost white hair and eyebrows, very pale blue eyes, broad white cheeks, thick lips, a rather puffy face, and small red hands),—and she came close up to him, then stopped, with her thumb in her mouth and stood watching him cry: then she laid her little hand on Christophe's head and said hurriedly and shyly, with just the same smile of compassion:

"Don't cry! Don't cry!"

Then Christophe could not control himself any longer, and he burst into sobs, and buried his face in the little girl's pinafore, while, in a quavering, tender voice, she went on saying:

"Don't cry. . . ."

She died soon afterwards, a few weeks perhaps: the hand of death must have been upon her at the time of that little scene. . . . Why should he think of her now? There was no connection between the child who was dead and forgotten, the humble daughter of the people in a distant German town, and the aristocratic young lady who was gazing at him now. But there is only one soul for all: and although millions of human beings seem to be all different one from another, different as the worlds moving in the heavens, it is the same flash of thought or love which lights up the hearts of men and women though centuries divide them. Christophe had just seen once more the light that he had seen shining upon the pale lips of the little comforter. . . .

It was all over in a second. A throng of people filled the door and shut out Christophe's view of the other room. He stepped back quickly into the shade, out of sight of the mirror: he was afraid lest his emotion should be noticed. But when he was calm again he wanted to see her once more. He was afraid she would be gone. He went into the room and he found her at once in the crowd, although she did not look in the least like what he had seen in the mirror. Now he saw her in profile sitting in a group of finely dressed ladies: her elbow was resting on the arm of her chair, she was leaning

forward a little, with her head in her hand, and listening to what they were saying with an intelligent absent smile: she had the expression and features of the young St. John, listening and looking through half-closed eyes, and smiling at his own thoughts, of *The Dispute* of Raphael. . . . Then she raised her eyes, saw him, and showed no surprise. And he saw that her smile was for himself. He was much moved, and bowed, and went up to her.

"You don't recognize me?" she said.

He knew her again that very moment.

"Grazia" . . . he said.*

At the same moment the ambassador's wife passed by, and smiled with pleasure to see that the long-sought meeting had at last come about: and she introduced Christophe to "Countess Berény." But Christophe was so moved that he did not even hear her, and he did not notice the new name. She was still his little Grazia to him.

Grazia was twenty-two. She had been married for a year to a young attaché of the Austrian Embassy, a nobleman, a member of a great family, related to one of the Emperor's chief ministers, a snob, a man of the world, smart, prematurely worn out; with whom she had been genuinely in love, while she still loved him, though she judged him. Her old father was dead. Her husband had been appointed to the Embassy in Paris. Through Count Berény's influence, and her own charm and intelligence, the timid little girl, whom the smallest thing used to set in a flutter, had become one of the best-known women in Parisian society, though she did nothing to procure that distinction, which embarrassed her not at all. It is a great thing to be young and pretty, and to give pleasure, and to know it. And it is a thing no less great to have a tranquil heart, sound and serene, which can find happiness in the harmonious coincidence of its desires and its fate. The lonely flower of her life had unfolded its petals: but she had lost some of the calm music of her Latin soul, fed by the light and the mighty peace of Italy. Quite naturally

*See "Jean-Christophe in Paris: The Market-Place."

she had acquired a certain influence in Parisian society: it did not surprise her, and she was discreet and adroit in using it to further the artistic or charitable movements which turned to her for aid: she left the official patronage of these movements to others: for although she could well maintain her rank, she had preserved a secret independence from the days of her rather wild childish days in the lonely villa in the midst of the fields, and society wearied while it amused her, though she always disguised her boredom by the amiable smile of a courteous and kind heart.

She had not forgotten her great friend Christophe. No doubt there was nothing left of the child in whom an innocent love had burned in silence. This new Grazia was a very sensible woman, not at all given to romance. She regarded the exaggerations of her childish tenderness with a gentle irony. And yet she was always moved by the memory of it. The thought of Christophe was associated with the purest hours of her life. She could not hear his name spoken without feeling pleasure: and each of his successes delighted her as though she had shared in it herself: for she had felt that they must come to him. As soon as she arrived in Paris she tried to meet him again. She had invited him to her house, and had appended her maiden name to her letter. Christophe had paid no attention to it, and had flung the invitation into the waste-paper basket unanswered. She was not offended. She had gone on following his doings and, to a certain extent, his life, without his knowing it. It was she whose helping hand had come to his aid in the recent campaign against him in the papers. Grazia was in all things correct and had hardly any connection with the world of the Press: but when it came to doing a friend a service, she was capable of a malicious cunning in wheedling the people whom she most disliked. She invited the editor of the paper which was leading the snarling pack, to her house: and in less than no time she turned his head: she skilfully flattered his vanity: and she gained such an ascendancy over him, while she overawed him, that it needed only a few careless words of contemptuous astonishment at the attacks on Christophe for the campaign to be stopped short. The editor suppressed the insulting article

which was to appear next day: and when the writer asked why it was suppressed he rated him soundly. He did more: he gave orders to one of his factotums to turn out an enthusiastic article about Christophe within a fortnight: the article was turned out to order; it was enthusiastic and stupid. It was Grazia, too, who thought of organizing performances of her friend's music at the Embassy, and, knowing that he was interested in Cécile, helped her to make her name. And finally, through her influence among the German diplomatists, she began gently, quietly, and adroitly to awaken the interest of the powers that be in Christophe, who was banished from Germany: and little by little she did create a current of opinion directed towards obtaining from the Emperor a decree reopening the gates of his country to a great artist who was an honor to it. And though it was too soon to expect such an act of grace, she did at least succeed in procuring an undertaking that the Government would close its eyes to his two days' visit to his native town.

And Christophe, who was conscious of the presence of his invisible friend hovering about him without being able to find out who she was, at last recognized her in the young St. John whose eyes smiled at him in the mirror.

They talked of the past. Christophe hardly knew what they said. A man hears the woman he loves just as little as he sees her. He loves her. And when a man really loves he never even thinks whether he is loved or no. Christophe never doubted it. She was there: that was enough. All the rest had ceased to exist. . . .

Grazia stopped speaking. A very tall young man, quite handsome, well-dressed, clean-shaven, partly bald, with a bored, contemptuous manner, stood appraising Christophe through his eye-glass, and then bowed with haughty politeness.

"My husband," said she.

The clatter and chatter of the room rushed back to his ears. The inward light died down. Christophe was frozen, said nothing, bowed, and withdrew at once.

How ridiculous and consuming are the unreasonable demands of the souls of artists and the childish laws which gov-

ern their passionate lives! Hardly had he once more found the friend whom he had neglected in the old days when she loved him, while he had not thought of her for years, than it seemed to him that she was his, his very own, and that if another man had taken her he had stolen her from him: and she herself had no right to give herself to another. Christophe did not know clearly what was happening to him. But his creative daimon knew it perfectly, and in those days begat some of his loveliest songs of sorrowful love.

Some time passed before he saw her again. He was obsessed by thoughts of Olivier's troubles and his health. At last one day he came upon the address she had given him and he made up his mind to call on her.

As he went up the steps he heard the sound of workmen hammering. The anteroom was in disorder and littered with boxes and trunks. The footman replied that the Countess was not at home. But as Christophe was disappointedly going away after leaving his card, the servant ran after him and asked him to come in and begged his pardon. Christophe was shown into a little room in which the carpets had been rolled up and taken away. Grazia came towards him with her bright smile and her hand held out impulsively and gladly. All his foolish rancor vanished. He took her hand with the same happy impulsiveness and kissed it.

"Ah!" she said, "I am glad you came! I was so afraid I should have to go away without seeing you again!"

"Go away? You are going away!"

Once more darkness descended upon him.

"You see . . ." she said, pointing to the litter in the room. "We are leaving Paris at the end of the week."

"For long?"

She shrugged:

"Who knows?"

He tried to speak. But his throat was dry.

"Where are you going?"

"To the United States. My husband has been appointed first secretary to the Embassy."

"And so, and so . . ." he said . . . (his lips trembled) . . . "it is all over?"

"My dear friend!" she said, touched by his tone. . . . "No: it is not all over."

"I have found you again only to lose you?"

There were tears in her eyes.

"My dear friend," she said again.

He held his hand over his eyes and turned away to hide his emotion.

"Do not be so sad," she said, laying her hand on his.

Once more, just then, he thought of the little girl in Germany. They were silent.

"Why did you come so late?" she asked at last. "I tried to find you. You never replied."

"I did not know. I did not know," he said. . . . "Tell me, was it you who came to my aid so many times without my guessing who it was? . . . Do I owe it to you that I was able to go back to Germany? Were you my good angel, watching over me?"

She said:

"I was glad to be able to do something for you. I owe you so much!"

"What do you owe?" he asked. "I have done nothing for you."

"You do not know," she said, "what you have been to me."

She spoke of the days when she was a little girl and met him at the house of her uncle, Stevens, and he had given her through his music the revelation of all that is beautiful in the world. And little by little, with growing animation she told him with brief allusions, that were both veiled and transparent, of her childish feeling for him, and the way in which she had shared Christophe's troubles, and the concert at which he had been hissed, and she had wept, and the letter she had written and he had never answered: for he had not received it. And as Christophe listened to her, in all good faith, he projected his actual emotion and the tenderness he felt for the tender face so near his own into the past.

They talked innocently, fondly, and joyously. And, as he talked, Christophe took Grazia's hand. And suddenly they both stopped: for Grazia saw that Christophe loved her. And Christophe saw it too. . . .

For some time Grazia had loved Christophe without Christophe knowing or caring. Now Christophe loved Grazia: and Grazia had nothing for him but calm friendship: she loved another man. As so often happens, one of the two clocks of their lives was a little faster than the other, and it was enough to have changed the course of both their lives. . . .

Grazia withdrew her hand, and Christophe did not stay her. And they sat there for a moment, mum, without a word.

And Grazia said:

"Good-bye."

Christophe said plaintively once more:

"And it is all over?"

"No doubt it is better that it should be so."

"We shall not meet again before you go."

"No," she said.

"When shall we meet again?"

She made a sad little gesture of doubt.

"Then," said Christophe, "what's the good, what's the good of our having met again?"

Her eyes reproached him, and he said quickly:

"No. Forgive me. I am unjust."

"I shall always think of you," said she.

"Alas!" he replied, "I cannot even think of you. I know nothing of your life."

Very quietly she described her ordinary life in a few words and told him how her days were spent. She spoke of herself and of her husband with her lovely affectionate smile.

"Ah!" he said jealously. "You love him?"

"Yes," she said.

He got up.

"Good-bye."

She got up too. Then only he saw that she was with child. And in his heart there was an inexpressible feeling of disgust, and tenderness, and jealousy, and passionate pity. She walked with him to the door of the little room. There he turned, bent over her hands, and kissed them fervently. She stood there with her eyes half closed and did not stir. At last he drew himself up, turned, and hurried away without looking at her.

. . . E chi allora m'avesse domandato di cosa alcuna, la mia risposta sarebbe stata solamente AMORE, *con viso vestito d'umiltà. . . .*

All Saints' Day. Outside, a gray light and a cold wind. Christophe was with Cécile, who was sitting near the cradle, and Madame Arnaud was bending over it. She had dropped in. Christophe was dreaming. He was feeling that he had missed happiness: but he never thought of complaining: he knew that happiness existed. . . . Oh! sun, I have no need to see thee to love thee! Through the long winter days, when I shiver in the darkness, my heart is full of thee: my love keeps me warm: I know that thou art there. . . .

And Cécile was dreaming too. She was pondering the child, and she had come to believe that it was indeed her own. Oh, blessed power of dreams, the creative imagination of life! Life. . . . What is life? It is not as cold reason and our eyes tell us that it is. Life is what we dream, and the measure of life is love.

Christophe gazed at Cécile, whose peasant face with its wide-set eyes shone with the splendor of the maternal instinct,—she was more a mother than the real mother. And he looked at the tender weary face of Madame Arnaud. In it, as in books that moved him, he read the hidden sweetness and suffering of the life of a married woman which, though none ever suspects it, is sometimes as rich in sorrow and joy as the love of Juliet or Ysolde: though it touches a greater height of religious feeling. . . .

Socia rei humanæ atque divinæ. . . .

And he thought that children or the lack of children has as much to do with the happiness or unhappiness of those who marry and those who do not marry as faith and the lack of faith. Happiness is the perfume of the soul, the harmony that dwells, singing, in the depths of the heart. And the most beautiful of all the music of the soul is kindness.

Olivier came in. He was quite calm and reposeful in his movements: a new serenity shone in him. He smiled at the child, shook hands with Cécile and Madame Arnaud, and began to talk quietly. He watched them with a sort of surprised affection. He was no longer the same. In the isolation in which he had shut himself up with his grief, like a caterpillar in the nest of its own spinning, he had succeeded after a hard struggle in throwing off his sorrow like an empty shell. Some

day we shall tell how he thought he had found a fine cause to which to devote his life, in which he had no interest save that of sacrifice: and, as it is ordered, on the very day when in his heart he had come to a definite renunciation of life, it was kindled once more. His friends looked at him. They did not know what had happened, and dared not ask him: but they felt that he was free once more, and that there was in him neither regret nor bitterness for anything or against anybody in the whole wide world.

Christophe got up and went to the piano, and said to Olivier:

"Would you like me to sing you a melody of Brahms?"

"Brahms?" said Olivier. "Do you play your old enemy's music nowadays?"

"It is All Saints' Day," said Christophe. "The day when all are forgiven."

Softly, so as not to wake the child, he sang a few bars of the old Schwabian folk-song:

". . . Für die Zeit, wo du g'liebt mi hast,
Da dank' i dir schön,
Und i wünsch', dass dir's anders wo
Besser mag geh'n. . . ."

". . . For the time when thou did'st love me,
I do thank thee well;
And I hope that elsewhere
Thou may'st better fare. . . ."

"Christophe!" said Olivier.

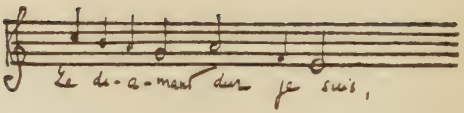
Christophe hugged him close.

"Come, old fellow," he said. "We have fared well."

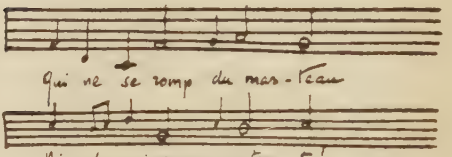
The four of them sat near the sleeping child. They did not speak. And if they had been asked what they were thinking,—*with the countenance of humility, they would have replied only:*

"Love."

THE BURNING BUSH



Le diamant dur je suis,
Qui ne se romp du marteau
Ni du sizeau retaillé.
Frape, frape, frape moy,
Pour cela ne mourray.



Come le Fenix je suis,
Qui de sa mort reprans vie,
Qui de sa cendre naistra.
Tüe, tüe, tüe moy,
Pour cela ne mourray.

Baïf { Chansonnettes mesurées,
mises en musique par
Jacques Mauduit.

I

Came calmness to his heart. No wind stirred. The air was still. . . .

Christophe was at rest: peace was his. He was in a certain measure proud of having conquered it: but secretly, in his heart of hearts, he was sorry for it. He was amazed at the silence. His passions were slumbering: in all good faith he thought that they would never wake again.

The mighty, somewhat brutal force that was his was browsing listlessly and aimlessly. In his inmost soul there was a secret void, a hidden question: "What's the good?": perhaps a certain consciousness of the happiness which he had failed to grasp. He had not force enough to struggle either with himself or with others. He had come to the end of a stage in his progress: he was reaping the fruits of all his former efforts, cumulatively: too easily he was tapping the vein of music that he had opened and while the public was naturally behindhand, and was just discovering and admiring his old work, he was beginning to break away from them without knowing as yet whether he would be able to make any advance on them. He had now a uniform and even delight in creation. At this period of his life art was to him no more than a fine instrument upon which he played like a virtuoso. He was ashamedly conscious of becoming a dilettante.

"*If,*" said Ibsen, "*a man is to persevere in his art, he must have something else, something more than his native genius: passions, sorrows, which shall fill his life and give it a direction. Otherwise he will not create, he will write books.*"

Christophe was writing books. He was not used to it. His books were beautiful. He would have rather had them less beautiful and more alive. He was like an athlete resting, not knowing to what use to turn his muscles, and, yawning in boredom like a caged wild beast, he sat looking ahead at the years and years of peaceful work that awaited him. And as, with

his old German capacity for optimism, he had no difficulty in persuading himself that everything was for the best, he thought that such a future was no doubt the appointed inevitable end: he flattered himself that he had issued from his time of trial and tribulation and had become master of himself. That was not saying much. . . . Oh, well! A man is sovereign over that which is his, he is what he is capable of being. . . . He thought that he had reached his haven.

The two friends were not living together. After Jacqueline's flight, Christophe had thought that Olivier would come back and take up his old quarters with him. But Olivier could not. Although he felt keenly the need of intimacy with Christophe, yet he was conscious of the impossibility of resuming their old existence together. After the years lived with Jacqueline, it would have seemed intolerable and even sacrilegious to admit another human being to his most intimate life,—even though he loved and were loved by that other a thousand times more than Jacqueline.—There was no room for argument.

Christophe had found it hard to understand. He returned again and again to the charge, he was surprised, saddened, hurt, and angry. Then his instinct, which was finer and quicker than his intelligence, bade him take heed. Suddenly he ceased, and admitted that Olivier was right.

But they saw each other every day: and they had never been so closely united even when they were living under the same roof. Perhaps they did not exchange their most intimate thoughts when they talked. They did not need to do so. The exchange was made naturally, without need of words, by grace of the love that was in their hearts.

They talked very little, for each was absorbed: one in his art, the other in his memories. Olivier's sorrow was growing less: but he did nothing to mitigate it, rather almost taking a pleasure in it: for a long time it had been his only reason for living. He loved his child: but his child—a puling baby—could occupy no great room in his life. There are men who are more lovers than fathers, and it is useless to cry out against them. Nature is not uniform, and it would be absurd to try

to impose identical laws upon the hearts of all men. No man has the right to sacrifice his duty to his heart. At least the heart must be granted the right to be unhappy where a man does his duty. What Olivier perhaps most loved in his child was the woman of whose body it was made.

Until quite recently he had paid little attention to the sufferings of others. He was an intellectual living too much shut up in himself. It was not egoism so much as a morbid habit of dreaming. Jacqueline had increased the void about him: her love had traced a magic circle about Olivier to cut him off from other men, and the circle endured after love had ceased to be. In addition he was a little aristocratic by temper. From his childhood on, in spite of his soft heart, he had held aloof from the mob for reasons rooted in the delicacy of his body and his soul. The smell of the people and their thoughts were repulsive to him.

But everything had changed as the result of a commonplace tragedy which he had lately witnessed.

He had taken a very modest lodging at the top of the Montrouge quarter, not far from Christophe and Cécile. The district was rather common, and the house in which he lived was occupied by little gentlepeople, clerks, and a few working-class families. At any other time he would have suffered from such surroundings in which he moved as a stranger: but now it mattered very little to him where he was: he felt that he was a stranger everywhere. He hardly knew and did not want to know who his neighbors were. When he returned from his work—(he had gone into a publishing-house)—he withdrew into his memories, and would only go out to see his child and Christophe. His lodging was not home to him: it was the dark room in which the images of the past took shape and dwelling: the darker it was the more clearly did the inward images emerge. He scarcely noticed the faces of those he passed on the stairs. And yet unconsciously he was aware of certain faces that were impressed upon his mind. There is a certain order of mind which only really sees things after they have passed. But then, nothing escapes them, the smallest details are graven on the plate. Olivier's was such a mind: he

bore within himself multitudes of the shadowy shapes of the living. With any emotional shock they would come mounting up in crowds: and Olivier would be amazed to recognize those whom he had never known, and sometimes he would hold out his hands to grasp them. . . . Too late.

One day as he came out of his rooms he saw a little crowd collected in front of the house-door round the housekeeper, who was making a harangue. He was so little interested that he was for going his way without troubling to find out what was the matter: but the housekeeper, anxious to gain another listener, stopped him, and asked him if he knew what had happened to the poor Roussels. Olivier did not even know who "the poor Roussels" were, and he listened with polite indifference. When he heard that a working-class family, father, mother, and five children, had committed suicide to escape from poverty in the house in which he lived, he stopped, like the rest, and looked up at the walls of the building, and listened to the woman's story, which she was nothing loth to begin again from the beginning. As she went on talking, old memories awoke in him, and he realized that he had seen the wretched family: he asked a few questions. . . . Yes, he remembered them: the man—(he used to hear him breathing noisily on the stairs)—a journeyman baker, with a pale face, all the blood drawn out of it by the heat of the oven, hollow cheeks always ill shaven: he had had pneumonia at the beginning of the winter: he had gone back to work only half cured: he had had a relapse: for the last three weeks he had had no work and no strength. The woman had dragged from childbirth to childbirth: crippled with rheumatism, she had worn herself out in trying to make both ends meet, and had spent her days running hither and thither trying to obtain from the Public Charity a meager sum which was not readily forthcoming. Meanwhile the children came, and went on coming: eleven, seven, three—not to mention two others who had died in between:—and, to crown all, twins who had chosen the very dire moment to make their appearance: they had been born only the month before.

—On the day of their birth, a neighbor said, the eldest of the five, a little girl of eleven, Justine—poor little mite!—had

begun to cry and asked how ever she could manage to carry both of them.

Olivier at once remembered the little girl,—a large forehead, with colorless hair pulled back, and sorrowful, gray bulging eyes. He was always meeting her, carrying provisions or her little sister: or she would be holding her seven-year-old brother by the hand, a little pinch-faced, cringing boy he was, with one blind eye. When they met on the stairs Olivier used to say, with his absent courteous manner:

"Pardon, mademoiselle."

But she never said anything: she used to go stiffly by, hardly moving aside: but his illusory courtesy used to give her a secret pleasure. Only the evening before, at six o'clock, as he was going downstairs, he had met her for the last time: she was carrying up a bucket of charcoal. He had not noticed it, except that he did remark that the burden seemed to be very heavy. But that is merely in the order of things for the children of the people. Olivier had bowed, as usual, without looking at her. A few steps lower down he had mechanically looked up to see her leaning over the balustrade of the landing, with her little pinched face, watching him go down. She turned away at once, and resumed her climb upstairs. Did she know whither she was climbing?—Olivier had no doubt that she did, and he was obsessed by the thought of the child bearing death in the load that was too heavy for her, death the deliverer—the wretched children for whom to cease to be meant an end of suffering! He was unable to continue his walk. He went back to his room. But there he was conscious of the proximity of the dead. . . . Only a few thin walls between him and them. . . . To think that he had lived so near to such misery!

He went to see Christophe. He was sick at heart: he told himself that it was monstrous for him to have been so absorbed as he had been in vain regrets for love while there were so many creatures suffering misfortunes a thousand times more cruel, and it was possible to help and save them. His emotion was profound: there was no difficulty in communicating it. Christophe was easily impressionable, and he in his turn was moved. When he heard Olivier's story he tore up the page of music he had just been writing, and called himself a selfish

brute to be amusing himself with childish games. But, directly after, he picked up the pieces. He was too much under the spell of his music. And his instinct told him that a work of art the less would not make one happy man the more. The tragedy of want was no new thing to him: from his childhood on he had been used to treading on the edge of such abysmal depths, and contriving not to topple over. But he was apt to judge suicide harshly, being conscious as he was of such a fullness of force, and unable to understand how a man, under the pressure of any suffering whatsoever, could give up the struggle. Suffering, struggling, is there anything more normal? These things are the backbone of the universe.

Olivier also had passed through much the same sort of experience: but he had never been able to resign himself to it, either on his own account or for others. He had a horror of the poverty in which the life of his beloved Antoinette had been consumed. After his marriage with Jacqueline, when he had suffered the softening influence of riches and love, he had made haste to thrust back the memory of the sorrowful years when he and his sister had worn themselves out each day in the struggle to gain the right to live through the next, never knowing whether they would succeed or no. The memories of those days would come to him now that he no longer had his youthful egoism to preserve. Instead of flying before the face of suffering he set out to look for it. He did not need to go far to find it. In the state of mind in which he was he was prone to find it everywhere. The world was full of it, the world, that hospital. . . . Oh, the agony, the sorrow! Pains of the wounded body, quivering flesh, rotting away in life. The silent torture of hearts under gnawing grief. Children whom no one loves, poor hopeless girls, women seduced or betrayed, men deceived in their friends, their loves, their faith, the pitiable herd of the unfortunates whom life has broken and forgotten! . . . Not poverty and sickness were the most frightful things to see, but the cruelty of men one to another. Hardly had Olivier raised the cover of the hell of humanity than there rose to his ears the plaint of all the oppressed, the exploited poor, the persecuted peoples, massacred Armenians, Finland crushed and stifled, Poland rent in pieces, Russia martyred, Africa flung

to the rapacious pack of Europe, all the wretched creatures of the human race. It stifled him: he heard it everywhere, he could no longer close his ears to it, he could no longer conceive the possibility of there being people with any other thought. He was for ever talking about it to Christophe. Christophe grew anxious, and said:

"Be quiet! Let me work."

And as he found it hard to recover his balance he would lose his temper and swear.

"Damnation! My day is wasted! And you're a deal the better for it, aren't you?"

Olivier would beg his pardon.

"My dear fellow," said Christophe, "it's no good always looking down into the pit. It stops your living."

"One must lend a hand to those who are in the pit."

"No doubt. But how? By flinging ourselves down as well? For that is what you want. You've got a propensity for seeing nothing but the sad side of life. God bless you! Your pessimism is charitable, I grant you, but it is very depressing. Do you want to create happiness? Very well, then, be happy."

"Happy! How can one have the heart to be happy when one sees so much suffering? There can only be happiness in trying to lessen it and fighting the evil."

"Very good. But I don't help the unfortunate much by lashing out blindly in all directions. It means only one bad soldier the more. But I can bring comfort by my art and spread force and joy. Have you any idea how many wretched beings have been sustained in their suffering by the beauty of an idea, by a winged song? Every man to his own trade! You French people, like the generous scatterbrains that you are, are always the first to protest against the injustice of, say, Spain or Russia, without knowing what it is all about. I love you for it. But do you think you are helping things along? You rush at it and bungle it and the result is nil,—if not worse. . . . And, look you, your art has never been more weak and emaciated than now, when your artists claim to be taking part in the activities of the world. It is the strangest thing to see so many little writers and artists, all dilettante and rather dishonest, daring to set themselves up as apostles! They

would do much better if they were to give the people wine to drink that was not so adulterated.—My first duty is to do whatever I am doing well, and to give you healthy music which shall set new blood coursing in your veins and let the sun shine in upon you."

If a man is to shed the light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself. Olivier had none of it. Like the best man of to-day, he was not strong enough to radiate force by himself. But in unison with others he might have been able to do so. But with whom could he unite? He was free in mind and at heart religious, and he was rejected by every party political and religious. They were all intolerant and narrow and were continually at rivalry. Whenever they came into power they abused it. Only the weak and the oppressed attracted Olivier. In this at least he agreed with Christophe's opinion, that before setting out to combat injustice in distant lands, it were as well to fight injustice close at hand, injustice everywhere about, injustice for which each and every man is more or less responsible. There are only too many people who are quite satisfied with protesting against the evil wrought by others, without ever thinking of the evil that they do themselves.

At first he turned his attention to the relief of the poor. His friend, Madame Arnaud, helped to administer a charity. Olivier got her to allow him to help. But at the outset he had more than one setback: the poor people who were given into his charge were not all worthy of interest, or they were unresponsive to his sympathy, distrusted him, and shut their doors against him. Besides, it is hard for a man of intellect to be satisfied with charity pure and simple: it waters such a very small corner of the kingdom of wretchedness! Its effects are almost always piecemeal, fragmentary: it seems to move by chance, and to be engaged only in dressing wounds as fast as it discovers them: generally it is too modest and in too great a hurry to probe down to the roots of the evil. Now it was just this probing that Olivier's mind found indispensable.

He began to study the problem of social poverty. There was no lack of guides to point the way. In those days the social

question had become a society question. It was discussed in drawing-rooms, in the theater, in novels. Everybody claimed some knowledge of it. Some of the young men were expending the best part of their powers upon it.

Every new generation needs to have some splendid mania or other. Even the most selfish of young people are endowed with a superfluity of life, a capital sum of energy which has been advanced to them and cannot be left idle and unproductive: they are for ever seeking to expend it on a course of action, or—(more prudently)—on a theory. Aviation or Revolution, a muscular or intellectual exercise. When a man is young he needs to be under the illusion that he is sharing in some great movement of humanity and is renewing the life of the world. It is a lovely thing when the senses thrill in answer to every puff of the winds of the universe! Then a man is so free, so light! Not yet is he laden with the ballast of a family, he has nothing, risks next to nothing. A man is very generous when he can renounce what is not yet his. Besides, it is so good to love and to hate, and to believe that one is transforming the earth with dreams and shouting! Young people are like watch-dogs: they are for ever howling and barking at the wind. An act of injustice committed at the other end of the world will send them off their heads.

Dogs barking through the night. From one farm to another in the heart of the forest they were yelping to one another, never ceasing. The night was stormy. It was not easy to sleep in those days. The wind bore through the air the echoes of so many acts of injustice! . . . The tale of injustice is unnumbered: in remedying one there is danger of causing others. What is injustice?—To one man it means a shameful peace, the fatherland dismembered. To another it signifies war. To another it means the destruction of the past, the banishment of princes: to another, the spoliation of the Church: to yet another the stifling of the future to the peril of liberty. For the people, injustice lies in inequality: for the upper ten, in equality. There are so many different kinds of injustice that each age chooses its own,—the injustice that it fights against, and the injustice that it countenances.

At the present time the mightiest efforts of the world were

directed against social injustice,—and unconsciously were tending to the production of fresh injustice.

And, in truth, such injustice had waxed great and plain to see since the working-classes, growing in numbers and power, had become part of the essential machinery of the State. But in spite of the declamations of the tribunes and bards of the people, their condition was not worse, but rather better than it had ever been in the past: and the change had come about not because they suffered more, but because they had grown stronger. Stronger by reason of the very power of the hostile ranks of Capital, by the fatality of economic and industrial development which had banded the workers together in armies ready for the fight, and, by the use of machinery, had given weapons into their hands, and had turned every foreman into a master with power over light, lightning, movement, all the energy of the world. From this enormous mass of elementary forces, which only a short time ago the leaders of men were trying to organize, there was given out a white heat, electric waves gradually permeating the whole body of human society.

It was not by reason of its justice, or its novelty, or the force of the ideas bound up in it that the cause of the people was stirring the minds of the intelligent middle-class, although they were fain to think so. Its appeal lay in its vitality.

Its justice? Justice was everywhere and every day violated thousands of times without the world ever giving a thought to it. Its ideas? Scraps of truth, picked up here and there and adjusted to the interests and requirements of one class at the expense of the other classes. Its creed was as absurd as every other creed,—the Divine Right of Kings, the Infallibility of the Popes, Universal Suffrage, the Equality of Man,—all equally absurd if one only considers them by their rational value and not in the light of the force by which they are animated. What did their mediocrity matter? Ideas have never conquered the world as ideas, but only by the force they represent. They do not grip men by their intellectual contents, but by the radiant vitality which is given off from them at certain periods in history. They give off as it were a rich scent which overpowers even the dullest sense of smell. The loftiest and most sublime idea remains ineffective until the day when

it becomes contagious, not by its own merits, but by the merits of the groups of men in whom it becomes incarnate by the transfusion of their blood. Then the withered plant, the rose of Jericho, comes suddenly to flower, grows to its full height, and fills all the air with its powerful aroma.—Some of the ideas which were now the flaming standard under which the working-classes were marching on to the assault upon the capitalistic citadel, emanated from the brains of dreamers of the comfortable classes. While they had been left in their comfortable books, they had lain dead: items in a museum, mummies packed away in glass cases with no one to look at them. But as soon as the people laid hands on them, they had become part and parcel of the people, they had been given their feverish reality, which deformed them while it gave them life, breathing into such abstract reason, their hallucinations, and their hopes, like a burning wind of Hegira. They were quickly spread from man to man. Men succumbed to them without knowing from whom they came or how they had been brought. They were no respecters of persons. The moral epidemic spread and spread: and it was quite possible for limited creatures to communicate it to superior men. Every man was unwittingly an agent in the transmission.

Such phenomena of intellectual contagion are to be observed in all times and in all countries: they make themselves felt even in aristocratic States where there is the endeavor to maintain castes hermetically sealed one against the other. But nowhere are they more electric than in democracies which preserve no sanitary barrier between the elect and the mob. The elect are contaminated at once whatever they do to fight against it. In spite of their pride and intelligence they cannot resist the contagion; for the elect are much weaker than they think. Intelligence is a little island fretted by the tides of humanity, crumbling away and at last engulfed. It only emerges again on the ebb of the tide.—One wonders at the self-denial of the French privileged classes when on the night of August 4 they abdicated their rights. Most wonderful of all, no doubt, is the fact that they could not do otherwise. I fancy a good many of them when they returned home must have said to themselves: "What have I done? I must have been drunk. . . ." A splen-

did drunkenness! Blessed be wine and the vine that gives it forth! It was not the privileged classes of old France who planted the vine whose blood brought them to drunkenness. The wine was extracted, they had only to drink it. He who drank must lose his wits. Even those who did not drink turned dizzy only from the smell of the vat that caught them as they passed. The vintages of the Revolution! . . . Hidden away in the family vaults there are left only a few empty bottles of the wine of '89: but our grandchildren's children will remember that their great-grandfathers had their heads turned by it.

It was a sourer wine but a wine no less strong that was mounting to the heads of the comfortable young people of Olivier's generation. They were offering up their class as a sacrifice to the new God, *Deo ignoto*:—the people.

To tell the truth, they were not all equally sincere. Many of them were only able to see in the movement an opportunity of rising above their class by affecting to despise it. For the majority it was an intellectual pastime, an oratorical enthusiasm which they never took altogether seriously. There is a certain pleasure in believing that you believe in a cause, that you are fighting, or will fight, for it,—or at least could fight. There is a by no means negligible satisfaction in the thought that you are risking something. Theatrical emotions.

They are quite innocent so long as you surrender to them simply without any admixture of interested motive.—But there were men of a more worldly type who only played the game of set purpose: the popular movement was to them only a road to success. Like the Norse pirates, they made use of the rising tide to carry their ships up into the land: they aimed at reaching the innermost point of the great estuaries so as to be left snugly ensconced in the conquered cities when the sea fell back once more. The channel was narrow and the tide was capricious: great skill was needed. But two or three generations of demagogy have created a race of corsairs who know every trick and secret of the trade. They rushed boldly in with never even so much as a glance back at those who foundered on the way.

This piratical rabble is made up of all parties: thank Heaven,

no party is responsible for it. But the disgust with which such adventurers had inspired the sincere and all men of conviction had led some of them to despair of their class. Olivier came in contact with rich young men of culture who felt very strongly that the comfortable classes were moribund and that they themselves were useless. He was only too much inclined to sympathize with them. They had begun by believing in the reformation of the people by the elect, they had founded Popular Universities, and taken no account of the time and money spent upon them, and now they were forced to admit the futility of their efforts: their hopes had been pitched too high, their discouragement sank too low. The people had either not responded to their appeal or had run away from it. When the people did come, they understood everything all wrong, and only assimilated the vices and absurdities of the culture of the superior classes. And in the end more than one scurvy knave had stolen into the ranks of the burgess apostles, and discredited them by exploiting both people and apostles at the same time. Then it seemed to honest men that the middle-class was doomed, that it could only infect the people who, at all costs, must break free and go their way alone. So they were left cut off from all possibility of action, save to predict and foresee a movement which would be made without and against themselves. Some of them found in this the joy of renunciation, the joy of deep disinterested human sympathy feeding upon itself and the sacrifice of itself. To love, to give self! Youth is so richly endowed that it can afford to do without repayment: youth has no fear of being left despoiled. And it can do without everything save the art of loving.—Others again found in it a pleasurable rational satisfaction, a sort of imperious logic: they sacrificed themselves not to men so much as to ideas. These were the bolder spirits. They took a proud delight in deducing the fated end of their class from their reasoned arguments. It would have hurt them more to see their predictions falsified than to be crushed beneath the weight of circumstance. In their intellectual intoxication they cried aloud to those outside: "Harder! Strike harder! Let there be nothing left of us!"—They had become the theorists of violence.

Of the violence of others. For, as usual, these apostles of brute force were almost always refined and weakly people. Many of them were officials of the State which they talked of destroying, industrious, conscientious, and orderly officials.

Their theoretical violence was the throwback from their weakness, their bitterness, and the suppression of their vitality. But above all it was an indication of the storms brewing all around them. Theorists are like meteorologists: they state in scientific terms not what the weather will be, but what the weather is. They are weathercocks pointing to the quarter whence the wind blows. When they turn they are never far from believing that they are turning the wind.

The wind had turned.

Ideas are quickly used up in a democracy, and the more quickly they are propagated, the more quickly are they worn out. There are any number of Republicans in France who in less than fifty years have grown disgusted with the Republic, with Universal Suffrage, with all the manifestations of liberty won with such blind intoxication! After the fetish worship of numbers, after the gaping optimism which had believed in the sanctity of the majority and had looked to it for the progress of humanity, there came the wind of brute force: the inability of the majority to govern themselves, their venality, their corruption, their base and fearful hatred of all superiority, their oppressive cowardice, raised the spirit of revolt: the minorities of energy—every kind of minority—appealed from the majority to force. A queer, yet inevitable alliance was brought about between the royalists of the *Action Française* and the syndicalists of the C. G. T. Balzac speaks somewhere of the men of his time who *"though aristocrats by inclination, yet became Republicans in spite of themselves, only to find many inferiors among their equals."*—A scant sort of pleasure. Those who are inferior must be made to accept themselves as such: and to bring that about there is nothing to be done but to create an authority which shall impose the supremacy of the elect—of either class, working or burgess—upon the oppressive majority. Our young intellectuals, being proud and of the better class, became royalists or revolutionaries out of injured vanity and hatred of democratic

equality. And the disinterested theorists, the philosophers of brute force, like good little weathercocks, reared their heads above them and were the oriflammes of the storm.

Last of all there was the herd of literary men in search of inspiration—men who could write and yet knew not what to write: like the Greeks at Aulis, they were becalmed and could make no progress, and sat impatiently waiting for a kindly wind from any quarter to come and belly out their sails.—There were famous men among them, men who had been wrenched away from their stylistic labors and plunged into public meetings by the Dreyfus affair. An example which had found only too many followers for the liking of those who had set it. There was now a mob of writing men all engrossed in politics, and claiming to control the affairs of the State. On the slightest excuse they would form societies, issue manifestoes, save the Capitol. After the intellectuals of the advance guard came the intellectuals of the rear: they were much of a muchness. Each of the two parties regarded the other as intellectual and themselves as intelligent. Those who had the luck to have in their veins a few drops of the blood of the people bragged about it: they dipped their pens into it, wrote with it.—They were all malcontents of the burgess class, and were striving to recapture the authority which that class had irreparably lost through its selfishness. Only in rare instances were these apostles known to keep up their apostolic zeal for any length of time. In the beginning the cause meant a certain amount of success to them, success which in all probability was in no wise due to their oratorical gifts. It gave them a delicious flattery for their vanity. Thereafter they went on with less success and a certain secret fear of being rather ridiculous. In the long-run the last feeling was apt to dominate the rest, being increased by the fatigue of playing a difficult part for men of their distinguished tastes and innate skepticism. But they waited upon the favor of the wind and of their escort before they could withdraw. For they were held captive both by wind and escort. These latter-day Voltaires and Joseph de Maistres, beneath their boldness in speech and writing, concealed a dread uncertainty, feeling the ground, being fearful of compromising themselves with the young men,

and striving hard to please them and to be younger than the young. They were revolutionaries or counter-revolutionaries merely as a matter of literature, and in the end they resigned themselves to following the literary fashion which they themselves had helped to create.

The oddest of all the types with which Olivier came in contact in the small burgess advance guard of the Revolution was the revolutionary who was so from timidity.

The specimen presented for his immediate observation was named Pierre Canet. He was brought up in a rich, middle-class, and conservative family, hermetically sealed against any new idea: they were magistrates and officials who had distinguished themselves by crabbing authority or being dismissed: thick-witted citizens of the Marais who flirted with the Church and thought little, but thought that little well. He had married, for want of anything better to do, a woman with an aristocratic name, who had no great capacity for thought, but did her thinking no less well than he. The bigoted, narrow, and retrograde society in which he lived, a society which was perpetually chewing the cud of its own conceit and bitterness, had finally exasperated him,—the more so as his wife was ugly and a bore. He was fairly intelligent and open-minded, and liberal in aspiration, without knowing at all clearly in what liberalism consisted: there was no likelihood of his discovering the meaning of liberty in his immediate surroundings. The only thing he knew for certain was that liberty did not exist there: and he fancied that he had only to leave to find it. On his first move outwards he was lucky enough to fall in with certain old college friends, some of whom had been smitten with syndicalistic ideas. He was even more at sea in their company than in the society which he had just quitted: but he would not admit it: he had to live somewhere: and he was unable to find people of his own cast of thought (that is to say, people of no cast of thought whatever), though, God knows, the species is by no means rare in France! But they are ashamed of themselves: they hide themselves, or they take on the hue of one of the fashionable political colors, if not of several, all at once. Besides, he was under the influence of his friends.

As always happens, he had particularly attached himself

to the very man who was most different from himself. This Frenchman, French, burgess and provincial to his very soul, had become the *fidus Achates* of a young Jewish doctor named Manousse Heimann, a Russian refugee, who, like so many of his fellow-countrymen, had the twofold gift of settling at once among strangers and making himself at home, and of being so much at his ease in any sort of revolution as to rouse wonder as to what it was that most interested him in it: the game or the cause. His experiences and the experiences of others were a source of entertainment to him. He was a sincere revolutionary, and his scientific habit of mind made him regard the revolutionaries and himself as a kind of madmen. His excited dilettantism and his extreme instability of mind made him seek the company of men the most opposite. He had acquaintances among those in authority and even among the police: he was perpetually prying and spying with that morbid and dangerous curiosity which makes so many Russian revolutionaries seem to be playing a double game, and sometimes reduces the appearance to reality. It is not treachery so much as versatility, and it is thoroughly disinterested. There are so many men of action to whom action is a theater into which they bring their talents as comedians, quite honestly prepared at any moment to change their part! Manousse was as faithful to the revolutionary part as it was possible for him to be: it was the character which was most in accord with his natural anarchy, and his delight in demolishing the laws of the countries through which he passed. But yet, in spite of everything, it was only a part. It was always impossible to know how much was true and how much invented in what he said, and even he himself was never very sure.

He was intelligent and skeptical, endowed with the psychological subtlety of his twofold nationality, could discern quite marvelously the weaknesses of others, and his own, and was extremely skilful in playing upon them, so that he had no difficulty in gaining an ascendancy over Canet. It amused him to drag this Sancho Panza into Quixotic pranks. He made no scruple about using him, disposing of his will, his time, his money,—not for his own benefit, (he needed none, though no one knew how or in what way he lived),—but in the most com-

promising demonstrations of the cause. Canet submitted to it all: he tried to persuade himself that he thought like Manousse. He knew perfectly well that this was not the case: such ideas scared him: they were shocking to his common sense. And he had no love for the people. And, in addition, he had no courage. This big, bulky, corpulent young man, with his clean-shaven pinkish face, his short breathing, his pleasant, pompous, and rather childish way of speaking, with a chest like the Farnese Hercules, (he was a fair hand at boxing and single-stick), was the most timid of men. If he took a certain pride in being taken for a man of a subversive temper by his own people, in his heart of hearts he used to tremble at the boldness of his friends. No doubt the little thrill they gave him was by no means disagreeable as long as it was only in fun. But their fun was becoming dangerous. His fervent friends were growing aggressive, their hardy pretensions were increasing: they alarmed Canet's fundamental egoism, his deeply rooted sense of propriety, his middle-class pusillanimity. He dared not ask: "Where are you taking me to?" But, under his breath, he fretted and fumed at the recklessness of these young men who seemed to love nothing so much as breaking their necks, and never to give a thought as to whether they were not at the same time running a risk of breaking other people's.—What was it impelled him to follow them? Was he not free to break with them? He had not the courage. He was afraid of being left alone, like a child who gets left behind and begins to whimper. He was like so many men: they have no opinions, except in so far as they disapprove of all enthusiastic opinion: but if a man is to be independent he must stand alone, and how many men are there who are capable of that? How many men are there, even amongst the most clear sighted, who will dare to break free of the bondage of certain prejudices, certain postulates which cramp and fetter all the men of the same generation? That would mean setting up a wall between themselves and others. On the one hand, freedom in the wilderness, on the other, mankind. They do not hesitate: they choose mankind, the herd. The herd is evil smelling, but it gives warmth. Then those who have chosen pretend to think what they do not in fact think. It is not very difficult for

them: they know so little what they think! . . . "*Know thyself!*" . . . How could they, these men who have hardly a *Me* to know? In every collective belief, religious or social, very rare are the men who believe, because very rare are the men who are men. Faith is an heroic force: its fire has kindled but a very few human torches, and even these have often flickered. The apostles, the prophets, even Jesus have doubted. The rest are only reflections,—save at certain hours when their souls are dry and a few sparks falling from a great torch set light to all the surface of the plain: then the fire dies down, and nothing gleams but the glowing embers beneath the ashes. Not more than a few hundred Christians really believe in Christ. The rest believe that they believe, or else they only try to believe.

Many of these revolutionaries were like that. Our friend Canet tried hard to believe that he was a revolutionary: he did believe it. And he was scared at his own boldness.

All these comfortable people invoked divers principles: some followed the bidding of their hearts, others that of their reason, others again only their interests: some associated their way of thinking with the Gospel, others with M. Bergson, others, again, with Karl Marx, with Proudhon, with Joseph de Maistre, with Nietzsche, or with M. Sorel. There were men who were revolutionaries to be in the fashion, some who were so out of snobbishness, and some from shyness: some from hatred, others from love: some from a need of active, hot-headed heroism: and some in sheer slavishness, from the sheeplike quality of their minds. But all, without knowing it, were at the mercy of the wind. All were no more than those whirling clouds of dust which are to be seen like smoke in the far distance on the white roads in the country, clouds of dust foretelling the coming of the storm.

Olivier and Christophe watched the wind coming. Both of them had strong eyes. But they used them in different ways. Olivier, whose clear gaze, in spite of himself, pierced to the very inmost thoughts of men, was saddened by their mediocrity: but he saw the hidden force that sustained them: he was most struck

by the tragic aspect of things. Christophe was more sensible of their comic aspect. Men interested him, ideas not at all. He affected a contemptuous indifference towards them. He laughed at Socialistic Utopias. In a spirit of contradiction and out of instinctive reaction against the morbid humanitarianism which was the order of the day, he appeared to be more selfish than he was: he was a self-made man, a sturdy upstart, proud of his strength of body and will, and he was a little too apt to regard all those who had not his force as shirkers. In poverty and alone he had been able to win through: let others do the same! Why all this talk of a social question? What question? Poverty?

"I know all about that," he would say. "My father, my mother, I myself, we have been through it. It's only a matter of getting out of it."

"Not everybody can," Olivier would reply. "What about the sick and the unlucky?"

"One must help them, that's all. But that is a very different thing from setting them on a pinnacle, as people are doing nowadays. Only a short while ago people were asserting the odious doctrine of the rights of the strongest man. Upon my word, I'm inclined to think that the rights of the weakest are even more detestable: they're sapping the thought of to-day, the weakest man is tyrannizing over the strong, and exploiting them. It really looks as though it has become a merit to be diseased, poor, unintelligent, broken,—and a vice to be strong, upstanding, happy in fighting, and an aristocrat in brains and blood. And what is most absurd of all is this, that the strong are the first to believe it. . . . It's a fine subject for a comedy, my dear Olivier!"

"I'd rather have people laugh at me than make other people weep."

"Good boy!" said Christophe. "But, good Lord, who ever said anything to the contrary? When I see a hunchback, my back aches for him. . . . We're playing the comedy, we won't write it."

He did not suffer himself to be bitten by the prevalent dreams of social justice. His vulgar common sense told him and he believed that what had been would be.

"But if anybody said that to you about art you'd be up in arms against him."

"May be. Anyhow, I don't know about anything except art. Nor do you. I've no faith in people who talk about things without knowing anything about them."

Olivier's faith in such people was no greater. Both of them were inclined to push their distrust a little too far: they had always held aloof from politics. Olivier confessed, not without shame, that he could not remember ever having used his rights as an elector: for the last ten years he had not even entered his name at the *mairie*.

"Why," he asked, "should I take part in a comedy which I know to be futile? Vote? For whom should I vote? I don't see any reason for choosing between two candidates, both of whom are unknown to me, while I have only too much reason to expect that, directly the election is over, they will both be false to all their professions of faith. Keep an eye on them? Remind them of their duty? It would take up the whole of my life, with no result. I have neither time, nor strength, nor the rhetorical weapons, nor sufficient lack of scruple, nor is my heart steeled against all the disgust that action brings. Much better to keep clear of it all. I am quite ready to submit to the evil. But at least I won't subscribe to it."

But, in spite of his excessive clear-sightedness, Olivier, to whom the ordinary routine of politics was repulsive, yet preserved a chimerical hope in a revolution. He knew that it was chimerical: but he did not discard it. It was a sort of racial mysticism in him. Not for nothing does a man belong to the greatest destructive and constructive people of the Western world, the people who destroy to construct and construct to destroy,—the people who play with ideas and life, and are for ever making a clean sweep so as to make a new and better beginning, and shed their blood in pledge.

Christophe was endowed with no such hereditary Messianism. He was too German to relish much the idea of a revolution. He thought that there was no changing the world. Why all these theories, all these words, all this futile uproar?

"I have no need," he would say, "to make a revolution—or long speeches about revolution—in order to prove to my own sat-

isfaction that I am strong. I have no need, like these young men of yours, to overthrow the State in order to restore a King or a Committee of Public Safety to defend me. That's a queer way of proving your strength! I can defend myself. I am not an anarchist: I love all necessary order and I revere the laws which govern the universe. But I don't want an intermediary between them and myself. My will knows how to command, and it knows also how to submit. You've got the classics on the tip of your tongue. Why don't you remember your Corneille: '*Myself alone, and that is enough.*' Your desire for a master is only a cloak for your weakness. Force is like the light: only the blind can deny it. Be strong, calmly, without all your theories, without any act of violence, and then, as plants turn to the sun, so the souls of the weak will turn to you."

But even while he protested that he had no time to waste on political discussions, he was much less detached from it all than he wished to appear. He was suffering, as an artist, from the social unrest. In his momentary dearth of strong passion he would sometimes pause to look around and wonder for what people he was writing. Then he would see the melancholy patrons of contemporary art, the weary creatures of the upper-classes, the dilettante men and women of the burgess-class, and he would think:

"What profits it to work for such people as these?"

In truth there was no lack of men of refinement and culture, men sensitive to skill and craft, men even who were not incapable of appreciating the novelty or—(it is all the same)—the archaism of fine feeling. But they were bored, too intellectual, not sufficiently alive to believe in the reality of art: they were only interested in tricks,—tricks of sound, or juggling with ideas; most of them were distraught by other worldly interests, accustomed to scattering their attention over their multifarious occupations, none of which was "necessary." It was almost impossible for them to pierce the outer covering of art, to feel its heart deep down: art was not flesh and blood to them; it was literature. Their critics built up their impotence to issue from dilettantism into a theory, an intolerant theory. When it happened that a few here and there were vibrant enough to respond to the voice of art, they were not strong enough to bear it, and

were left disgruntled and nerve-ridden for life. They were sick men or dead. What could art do in such a hospital?—And yet in modern society he was unable to do without these cripples: for they had money, and they ruled the Press: they only could assure an artist the means of living. So then he must submit to such humiliation: an intimate and sorrowful art, music in which is told the secret of the artist's inmost life, offered up as an amusement—or rather as a palliative of boredom, or as another sort of boredom—in the theaters or in fashionable drawing-rooms, to an audience of snobs and worn-out intellectuals.

Christophe was seeking the real public, the public which believes in the emotions of art as in those of life, and feels them with a virgin soul. And he was vaguely attracted by the new promised world—the people. The memories of his childhood, Gottfried and the poor, who had revealed to him the living depths of art, or had shared with him the sacred bread of music, made him inclined to believe that his real friends were to be found among such people. Like many another young man of a generous heart and simple faith, he cherished great plans for a popular art, concerts, and a theater for the people, which he would have been hard put to it to define. He thought that a revolution might make it possible to bring about a great artistic renascence, and he pretended that he had no other interest in the social movement. But he was hoodwinking himself: he was much too alive not to be attracted and drawn onward by the sight of the most living activity of the time.

In all that he saw he was least of all interested in the middle-class theorists. The fruit borne by such trees is too often sapless: all the juices of life are wasted in ideas. Christophe did not distinguish between one idea and another. He had no preference even for ideas which were his own when he came upon them congealed in systems. With good-humored contempt he held aloof from the theorists of force as from the theorists of weakness. In every comedy the one ungrateful part is that of the *raisonneur*. The public prefers not only the sympathetic characters to him, but the unsympathetic characters also. Christophe was like the public in that. The *raisonneurs* of the social question seemed tiresome to him. But he amused himself by watching the rest, the simple, the men of conviction, those who

believed and those who wanted to believe, those who were tricked and those who wanted to be tricked, not to mention the buccaneers who plied their predatory trade, and the sheep who were made to be fleeced. His sympathy was indulgent towards the pathetically absurd little people like fat Canet. Their mediocrity was not offensive to him as it was to Olivier. He watched them all with affectionate and mocking interest: he believed that he was outside the piece they were playing: and he did not see that little by little he was being drawn into it. He thought only of being a spectator watching the wind rush by. But already the wind had caught him, and was dragging him along into its whirling cloud of dust.

The social drama was twofold. The piece played by the intellectuals was a comedy within a comedy; the people hardly heeded it. The real drama was that of the people. It was not easy to follow it: the people themselves did not always know where they were in it. It was all unexpected, unforeseen.

It was not only that there was much more talk in it than action. Every Frenchman, be he burgess or of the people, is as great an eater of speeches as he is of bread. But all men do not eat the same sort of bread. There is the speech of luxury for delicate palates, and the more nourishing sort of speech for hungry gullets. If the words are the same, they are not kneaded into the same shape: taste, smell, meaning, all are different.

The first time Olivier attended a popular meeting and tasted of the fare he lost his appetite: his gorge rose at it, and he could not swallow. He was disgusted by the platitudinous quality of thought, the drab and uncouth clumsiness of expression, the vague generalizations, the childish logic, the ill-mixed mayonnaise of abstractions and disconnected facts. The impropriety and looseness of the language were not compensated by the raciness and vigor of the vulgar tongue. The whole thing was compounded of a newspaper vocabulary, stale tags picked up from the reach-me-downs of middle-class rhetoric. Olivier was particularly amazed at the lack of simplicity. He forgot that literary simplicity is not natural, but acquired: it is a thing achieved by the people of the elect. Dwellers in towns cannot be simple: they are rather always on the lookout for far-fetched expressions.

Olivier did not understand the effect such turgid phrases might have on their audience. He had not the key to their meaning. We call foreign the languages of other races, and it never occurs to us that there are almost as many languages in our nation as there are social grades. It is only for a limited few that words retain their traditional and age-old meaning: for the rest they represent nothing more than their own experience and that of the group to which they belong. Many of such words, which are dead for the select few and despised by them, are like an empty house, wherein, as soon as the few are gone, new energy and quivering passion take up their abode. If you wish to know the master of the house, go into it.

That Christophe did.

He had been brought into touch with the working-classes by a neighbor of his who was employed on the State Railways. He was a little man of forty-five, prematurely old, with a pathetically bald head, deep-sunken eyes, hollow cheeks, a prominent nose, fleshy and aquiline, a clever mouth, and malformed ears with twisted lobes: the marks of degeneracy. His name was Alcide Gautier. He was not of the people, but of the lower middle-class. He came of a good family who had spent all they had on the education of their only son, but, for want of means, had been unable to let him go through with it. As a very young man he had obtained one of those Government posts which seem to the lower middle-class a very heaven, and are in reality death, —living death.—Once he had gone into it, it had been impossible for him to escape. He had committed the offense—(for it is an offense in modern society)—of marrying for love a pretty workgirl, whose innate vulgarity had only increased with time. She gave him three children and he had to earn a living for them. This man, who was intelligent and longed with all his might to finish his education, was cramped and fettered by poverty. He was conscious of latent powers in himself which were stifled by the difficulties of his existence: he could not take any decisive step. He was never alone. He was a bookkeeping clerk and had to spend his days over purely mechanical work in a room which he had to share with several of his colleagues who were vulgar chattering creatures: they were for ever talking

of idiotic things and avenged themselves for the absurdity of their existence by slandering their chiefs and making fun of him and his intellectual point of view which he had not been prudent enough to conceal from them. When he returned home it was to find an evil-smelling charmless room, a noisy common wife who did not understand him and regarded him as a humbug or a fool. His children did not take after him in anything: they took after their mother. Was it just that it should be so? Was it just? Nothing but disappointment and suffering and perpetual poverty, and work that took up his whole day from morning to night, and never the possibility of snatching an hour for recreation, an hour's silence, all this had brought him to a state of exhaustion and nervous irritability.—Christophe, who had pursued his acquaintance with him, was struck by the tragedy of his lot: an incomplete nature, lacking sufficient culture and artistic taste, yet made for great things and crushed by misfortune. Gautier clung to Christophe as a weak man drowning grasps at the arm of a strong swimmer. He felt a mixture of sympathy and envy for Christophe. He took him to popular meetings, and showed him some of the leaders of the syndicalist party to which he belonged for no other reason than his bitterness against society. For he was an aristocrat gone wrong. It hurt him terribly to mix with the people.

Christophe was much more democratic than he—the more so as nothing forced him to be so—and enjoyed the meetings. The speeches amused him. He did not share Olivier's feeling of repulsion: he was hardly at all sensible of the absurdities of the language. In his eyes a windbag was as good as any other man. He affected a sort of contempt for eloquence in general. But though he took no particular pains to understand their rhetoric, he did feel the music which came through the man who was speaking and the men who were listening. The power of the speaker was raised to the hundredth degree by the echo thrown back from his hearers. At first Christophe only took stock of the speakers, and he was interested enough to make the acquaintance of some of them.

The man who had the most influence on the crowd was Casimir Joussier,—a little, pale, dark man, between thirty and thirty-five, with a Mongolian cast of countenance, thin, puny, with cold

burning eyes, scant hair, and a pointed beard. His power lay not so much in his gesture, which was poor, stilted, and rarely in harmony with the words,—not so much in his speech, which was raucous and sibilant, with marked pauses for breathing,—as in his personality and the emphatic assurance and force of will which emanated from it. He never seemed to admit the possibility of any one thinking differently from himself: and as what he thought was what his audience wanted to think they had no difficulty in understanding one another. He would go on saying thrice, four times, ten times, the things they expected him to say: he never stopped hammering the same nail with a tenacious fury: and his audience, following his example, would hammer, hammer, hammer, until the nail was buried deep in the flesh.—Added to this personal ascendancy was the confidence inspired by his past life, the *prestige* of many terms in prison, largely deserved by his violent writings. He breathed out an indomitable energy: but for the seeing eye there was revealed beneath it all an accumulated fund of weariness, disgust with so much continual effort, anger against fate. He was one of those men who every day spend more than their income of vitality. From his childhood on he had been ground down by work and poverty. He had plied all sorts of trades: journeyman glass-blower, plumber, printer: his health was ruined: he was a prey to consumption, which plunged him into fits of bitter discouragement and dumb despair of the cause and of himself: at other times it would raise him up to a pitch of excitement. He was a mixture of calculated and morbid violence, of policy and recklessness. He was educated up to a certain point: he had a good knowledge of many things, science, sociology, and his various trades: he had a very poor knowledge of many others: and he was just as cocksure with both: he had Utopian notions, just ideas, ignorance in many directions, a practical mind, many prejudices, experience, and suspicion and hatred of burgess society. That did not prevent his welcoming Christophe. His pride was tickled by being sought out by a well-known artist. He was of the race of leaders, and, whatever he did, he was brusque with ordinary workmen. Although in all good faith he desired perfect equality, he found it easier to realize with those above than with those beneath him.

Christophe came across other leaders of the working-class movement. There was no great sympathy between them. If the common fight—with difficulty—produced unity of action, it was very far from creating unity of feeling. It was easy to see the external and purely transitory reality to which the distinction between the classes corresponded. The old antagonisms were only postponed and marked: but they continued to exist. In the movement were to be found men of the north and men of the south with their fundamental scorn of each other. The trades were jealous of each other's wages, and watched each other with an undisguised feeling of superiority to all others in each. But the great difference lay—and always will lie—in temperament. Foxes and wolves and horned beasts, beasts with sharp teeth, and beasts with four stomachs, beasts that are made to eat, and beasts that are made to be eaten, all sniffed at each other as they passed in the herd that had been drawn together by the accident of class and common interest: and they recognized each other: and they bristled.

Christophe sometimes had his meals at a little creamery and restaurant kept by a former colleague of Gautier's, one Simon, a railway clerk who had been dismissed for taking part in a strike. The shop was frequented by syndicalists. There were five or six of them who used to sit in a room at the back, looking on to an inclosed courtyard, narrow and ill-lit, from which there arose the never-ceasing desperate song of two caged canaries straining after the light. Joussier used to come with his mistress, the fair Berthe, a large coquettish young woman, with a pale face, and a purple cap, and merry, wandering eyes. She had under her thumb a good-looking boy, Léopold Graillot, a journeyman mechanic, who was clever and rather a *poseur:* he was the esthete of the company. Although he called himself an anarchist, and was one of the most violent opponents of the burgess-class, his soul was typical of that class at its very worst. Every morning for years he had drunk in the erotic and decadent news of the halfpenny literary papers. His reading had given him a strongly addled brain. His mental subtlety in imagining the pleasures of the senses was allied in him with an absolute lack of physical delicacy, indifference to cleanliness, and the comparative coarseness of his life. He had acquired a

taste for an occasional glass of such adulterated wine—the intellectual alcohol of luxury, the unwholesome stimulants of unhealthy rich men. Being unable to take these pleasures in the flesh, he inoculated his brain with them. That means a bad tongue in the morning and weakness in the knees. But it puts you on an equality with the rich. And you hate them.

Christophe could not bear him. He was more in sympathy with Sébastien Coquard, an electrician, who, with Joussier, was the speaker with the greatest following. He did not overburden himself with theories. He did not always know where he was going. But he did go straight ahead. He was very French. He was heavily built, about forty, with a big red face, a round head, red hair, a flowing beard, a bull neck, and a bellowing voice. Like Joussier, he was an excellent workman, but he loved drinking and laughter. The sickly Joussier regarded his superabundant health with the eyes of envy: and, though they were friends, there was always a simmering secret hostility between them.

Amélie, the manageress of the creamery, a kind creature of forty-five, who must have been pretty once, and still was, in spite of the wear of time, used to sit with them, with some sewing in her hands, listening to their talk with a jolly smile, moving her lips in time to their words: every now and then she would drop a remark into the discussion, and she would emphasize her words with a nod of her head as she worked. She had a married daughter and two children of seven and ten—a little girl and a boy—who used to do their home lessons at the corner of a sticky table, putting out their tongues, and picking up scraps of conversations which were not meant for their ears.

On more than one occasion Olivier tried to go with Christophe. But he could not feel at ease with these people. When these working-men were not tied down by strict factory hours or the insistent scream of a hooter, they seemed to have an incredible amount of time to waste, either after work, or between jobs, in loafing or idleness. Christophe, being in one of those periods when the mind has completed one piece of work and is waiting until a new piece of work presents itself, was in no greater hurry than they were: and he liked sitting there with his elbows on the table, smoking, drinking, and talking. But

Olivier's respectable burgess instincts were shocked, and so were his traditional habits of mental discipline, and regular work, and scrupulous economy of time: and he did not relish such a waste of so many precious hours. Besides that, he was not good at talking or drinking. Above all there was his physical distaste for it all, the secret antipathy which raises a physical barrier between the different types of men, the hostility of the senses, which stands in the way of the communion of their souls, the revolt of the flesh against the heart. When Olivier was alone with Christophe he would talk most feelingly about the duty of fraternizing with the people: but when he found himself face to face with the people, he was impotent to do anything, in spite of his good will. Christophe, on the other hand, who laughed at his ideas, could, without the least effort, meet any workman he chanced to come across in brotherhood. It really hurt Olivier to find himself so cut off from these men. He tried to be like them, to think like them, to speak like them. He could not do it. His voice was dull, husky, had not the ring that was in theirs. When he tried to catch some of their expressions the words would stick in his throat or sound queer and strange. He watched himself; he was embarrassed, and embarrassed them. He knew it. He knew that to them he was a stranger and suspect, that none of them was in sympathy with him, and then, when he was gone, everybody would sigh with relief: "Ouf!" As he passed among them he would notice hard, icy glances, such hostile glances as the working-classes, embittered by poverty, cast at any comfortable burgess. Perhaps Christophe came in for some of it too: but he never noticed it.

Of all the people in that place the only ones who showed any inclination to be friendly with Olivier were Amélie's children. They were much more attracted by their superior in station than disposed to hate him. The little boy was fascinated by the burgess mode of thought: he was clever enough to love it, though not clever enough to understand it: the little girl, who was very pretty, had once been taken by Olivier to see Madame Arnaud, and she was hypnotized by the comfort and ease of it all: she was silently delighted to sit in the fine armchairs, and to feel the beautiful clothes, and to be with lovely ladies: like the little

simpleton she was, she longed to escape from the people and soar upwards to the paradise of riches and solid comfort. Olivier had no desire or taste for the cultivation of these inclinations in her: and the simple homage she paid to his class by no means consoled him for the silent antipathy of her companions. Their ill-disposition towards him pained him. He had such a burning desire to understand them! And in truth he did understand them, too well, perhaps: he watched them too closely, and he irritated them. It was not that he was indiscreet in his curiosity, but that he brought to bear on it his habit of analyzing the souls of men and his need of love.

It was not long before he perceived the secret drama of Joussier's life: the disease which was undermining his constitution, and the cruelty of his mistress. She loved him, she was proud of him: but she had too much vitality: he knew that she was slipping away from him, would slip away from him: and he was aflame with jealousy. She found his jealousy diverting: she was for ever exciting the men about her, bombarding them with her eyes, flinging around them her sensual provocative atmosphere: she loved to play with him like a cat. Perhaps she deceived him with Graillot. Perhaps it pleased her to let him think so. In any case if she were not actually doing so, she very probably would. Joussier dared not forbid her to love whomsoever she pleased: did he not profess the woman's right to liberty equally with the man's? She reminded him of that slyly and insolently one day when he was upbraiding her. He was delivered up to a terrible struggle within himself between his theories of liberty and his violent instincts. At heart he was still a man like the men of old, despotic and jealous: by reason he was a man of the future, a Utopian. She was neither more nor less than the woman of yesterday, to-morrow, and all time.—And Olivier, looking on at their secret duel, the savagery of which was known to him by his own experience, was full of pity for Joussier when he realized his weakness. But Joussier guessed that Olivier was reading him: and he was very far from liking him for it.

There was another interested witness, an indulgent spectator of this game of love and hate. This was the manageress, Amélie. She saw everything without seeming to do so. She

knew life. She was an honest, healthy, tranquil, easy-going woman, and in her youth had been free enough. She had been in a florist's shop: she had had a lover of the class above her own: she had had other lovers. Then she had married a working-man. She had become a good wife and mother. But she understood everything, all the foolish ways of the heart, Joussier's jealousy, as well as the young woman's desire for amusement. She tried to help them to understand each other with a few affectionate words:

"You must make allowances: it is not worth while creating bad blood between you for such a trifle. . . ."

She was not at all surprised when her words produced no result. . . .

"That's the way of the world. We must always be torturing ourselves. . . ."

She had that splendid carelessness of the people, from which misfortune of every sort seems harmlessly to glide. She had had her share of unhappiness. Three months ago she had lost a boy of fifteen whom she dearly loved: it had been a great grief to her: but now she was once more busy and laughing. She used to say:

"If one were to think of these things one could not live."

So she ceased to think of it. It was not selfishness. She could not do otherwise: her vitality was too strong: she was absorbed by the present: it was impossible for her to linger over the past. She adapted herself to things as they were, and would adapt herself to whatever happened. If the revolution were to come and turn everything topsy-turvy she would soon manage to be standing firmly on her feet, and do everything that was there to do; she would be in her place wherever she might be set down. At heart she had only a modified belief in the revolution. She had hardly any real faith in anything whatever. It is hardly necessary to add that she used to consult the cards in her moments of perplexity, and that she never failed to make the sign of the cross when she met a funeral. She was very open-minded and very tolerant, and she had the skepticism of the people of Paris, that healthy skepticism which doubts, as a man breathes, joyously. Though she was the wife of a revolutionary, nevertheless she took up a motherly and ironical attitude to-

wards her husband's ideas and those of his party—and those of the other parties,—the sort of attitude she had towards the follies of youth—and of maturity. She was never much moved by anything. But she was interested in everything. And she was equally prepared for good and bad luck. In fine, she was an optimist.

"It's no good getting angry. . . . Everything settles itself so long as your health is good. . . ."

That was clearly to Christophe's way of thinking. They did not need much conversation to discover that they belonged to the same family. Every now and then they would exchange a good-humored smile, while the others were haranguing and shouting. But, more often, she would laugh to herself as she looked at Christophe, and saw him being caught up by the argument to which he would at once bring more passion than all the rest put together.

Christophe did not observe Olivier's isolation and embarrassment. He made no attempt to probe down to the inner workings of his companions. But he used to eat and drink with them, and laugh and lose his temper. They were never distrustful of him, although they used to argue heatedly enough. He did not mince his words with them. At bottom he would have found it very hard to say whether he was with or against them. He never stopped to think about it. No doubt if the choice had been forced upon him he would have been a syndicalist as against Socialism and all the doctrines of the State—that monstrous entity, that factory of officials, human machines. His reason approved of the mighty effort of the coöperative groups, the two-edged ax of which strikes at the same time at the dead abstractions of the socialistic State, and at the sterility of individualism, that corrosion of energy, that dispersion of collective force in individual frailties,—the great source of modern wretchedness for which the French Revolution is in part responsible.

But Nature is stronger than reason. When Christophe came in touch with the syndicates—those formidable coalitions of the weak—his vigorous individuality drew back. He could not help despising those men who needed to be linked together before

they could march on to the fight; and if he admitted that it was right for them to submit to such a law, he declared that such a law was not for him. Besides, if the weak and the oppressed are sympathetic, they cease altogether to be so when they in their turn become oppressors. Christophe, who had only recently been shouting out to the honest men living in isolation: "Unite! Unite!" had a most unpleasant sensation when for the first time he found himself in the midst of such unions of honest men, all mixed up with other men who were less honest, and yet were endowed with their force, their rights, and only too ready to abuse them. The best people, those whom Christophe loved, the friends whom he had met in The House, on every floor, drew no sort of profit from these fighting combinations. They were too sensitive at heart and too timid not to be scared: they were fated to be the first to be crushed out of existence by them. Face to face with the working-class movement they were in the same position as Olivier and the most warmly generous of the young men of the middle-class. Their sympathies were with the workers organizing themselves. But they had been brought up in the cult of liberty: now liberty was exactly what the revolutionaries cared for least of all. Besides, who is there nowadays that cares for liberty? A select few who have no sort of influence over the world. Liberty is passing through dark days. The Popes of Rome proscribe the light of reason. The Popes of Paris put out the light of the heavens. And M. Pataud puts out the lights of the streets. Everywhere imperialism is triumphant: the theocratic imperialism of the Church of Rome: the military imperialism of the mercantile and mystic monarchies: the bureaucratic imperialism of the republics of Freemasonry and covetousness: the dictatorial imperialism of the revolutionary committees. Poor liberty, thou art not in this world! . . . The abuse of power preached and practised by the revolutionaries revolted Christophe and Olivier. They had little regard for the blacklegs who refuse to suffer for the common cause. But it seemed abominable to them that the others should claim the right to use force against them.—And yet it is necessary to take sides. Nowadays the choice in fact lies not between imperialism and liberty, but between one imperialism and another. Olivier said:

"Neither. I am for the oppressed."

Christophe hated the tyranny of the oppressors no less. But he was dragged into the wake of force in the track of the army of the working-classes in revolt.

He was hardly aware that it was so. He would tell his companions in the restaurant that he was not with them.

"As long as you are only out for material interests," he would say, "you don't interest me. The day when you march out for a belief then I shall be with you. Otherwise, what have I to do with the conflict between one man's belly and another's? I am an artist; it is my duty to defend art; I have no right to enroll myself in the service of a party. I am perfectly aware that recently certain ambitious writers, impelled by a desire for an unwholesome popularity, have set a bad example. It seems to me that they have not rendered any great service to the cause which they defended in that way: but they have certainly betrayed art. It is our, the artists', business to save the light of the intellect. We have no right to obscure it with your blind struggles. Who shall hold the light aloft if we let it fall? You will be glad enough to find it still intact after the battle. There must always be workers busy keeping up the fire in the engine, while there is fighting on the deck of the ship. To understand everything is to hate nothing. The artist is the compass which, through the raging of the storm, points steadily to the north."

They regarded him as a maker of phrases, and said that, if he were talking of compasses, it was very clear that he had lost his: and they gave themselves the pleasure of indulging in a little friendly contempt at his expense. In their eyes an artist was a shirker who contrived to work as little and as agreeably as possible.

He replied that he worked as hard as they did, harder even, and that he was not nearly so afraid of work. Nothing disgusted him so much as *sabotage,* the deliberate bungling of work, and skulking raised to the level of a principle.

"All these wretched people," he would say, "afraid for their own skins! . . . Good Lord! I've never stopped working since I was eight. You people don't love your work; at heart you're just common men. . . . If only you were capable of destroying

the Old World! But you can't do it. You don't even want to. No, you don't even want to. It is all very well for you to go about shrieking menace and pretending you're going to exterminate the human race. You have only one thought: to get the upper hand and lie snugly in the warm beds of the middle-classes. Except for a few hundred poor devils, navvies, who are always ready to break their bones or other people's bones for no particular reason,—just for fun—or for the pain, the age-old pain with which they are simply bursting, the whole lot of you think of nothing but deserting the camp and going over to the ranks of the middle-classes on the first opportunity. You become Socialists, journalists, lecturers, men of letters, deputies, Ministers. . . . Bah! Bah! Don't you go howling about so-and-so! You're no better. You say he is a traitor? . . . Good. Whose turn next? You'll all come to it. There is not one of you who can resist the bait. How could you? There is not one of you who believes in the immortality of the soul. You are just so many bellies, I tell you. Empty bellies thinking of nothing but being filled."

Thereupon they would all lose their tempers and all talk at once. And in the heat of the argument it would often happen that Christophe, whirled away by his passion, would become more revolutionary than the others. In vain did he fight against it: his intellectual pride, his complacent conception of a purely esthetic world, made for the joy of the spirit, would sink deep into the ground at the sight of injustice. Esthetic, a world in which eight men out of ten live in nakedness and want, in physical and moral wretchedness? Oh! come! A man must be an impudent creature of privilege who would dare to claim as much. An artist like Christophe, in his inmost conscience, could not but be on the side of the working-classes. What man more than the spiritual worker has to suffer from the immorality of social conditions, from the scandalously unequal partition of wealth among men? The artist dies of hunger or becomes a millionaire for no other reason than the caprice of fashion and of those who speculate on fashion. A society which suffers its best men to die or gives them extravagant rewards is a monstrous society: it must be swept and put in order. Every man, whether he works or no, has a right to a living minimum.

Every kind of work, good or mediocre, should be rewarded, not according to its real value—(who can be the infallible judge of that?)—but according to the normal legitimate needs of the worker. Society can and should assure the artist, the scientist, and the inventor an income sufficient to guarantee that they have the means and the time yet further to grace and honor it. Nothing more. The *Gioconda* is not worth a million. There is no relation between a sum of money and a work of art: a work of art is neither above nor below money: it is outside it. It is not a question of payment: it is a question of allowing the artist to live. Give him enough to feed him, and allow him to work in peace. It is absurd and horrible to try to make him a robber of another's property. This thing must be put bluntly: every man who has more than is necessary for his livelihood and that of his family, and for the normal development of his intelligence, is a thief and a robber. If he has too much, it means that others have too little. How often have we smiled sadly to hear tell of the inexhaustible wealth of France, and the number of great fortunes, we workers, and toilers, and intellectuals, and men and women who from our very birth have been given up to the wearying task of keeping ourselves from dying of hunger, often struggling in vain, often seeing the very best of us succumbing to the pain of it all,—we who are the moral and intellectual treasure of the nation! You who have more than your share of the wealth of the world are rich at the cost of our suffering and our poverty. That troubles you not at all: you have sophistries and to spare to reassure you: the sacred rights of property, the fair struggle for life, the supreme interests of that Moloch, the State and Progress, that fabulous monster, that problematical Better to which men sacrifice the Good,—the Good of other men.—But for all that, the fact remains, and all your sophistries will never manage to deny it: "You have too much to live on. We have not enough. And we are as good as you. And some of us are better than the whole lot of you put together."

So Christophe was affected by the intoxication of the passions with which he was surrounded. Then he was astonished at his own bursts of eloquence. But he did not attach any importance

to them. He was amused by such easily roused excitement, which he attributed to the bottle. His only regret was that the wine was not better, and he would belaud the wines of the Rhine. He still thought that he was detached from revolutionary ideas. But there arose the singular phenomenon that Christophe brought into the discussion, if not the upholding of them, a steadily increasing passion, while that of his companions seemed in comparison to diminish.

As a matter of fact, they had fewer illusions than he. Even the most violent leaders, the men who were most feared by the middle-classes, were at heart uncertain and horribly middle-class. Coquard, with his laugh like a stallion's neigh, shouted at the top of his voice and made terrifying gestures: but he only half believed what he was saying: it was all for the pleasure of talking, giving orders, being active: he was a braggart of violence. He knew the cowardice of the middle-classes through and through, and he loved terrorizing them by showing that he was stronger than they: he was quite ready to admit as much to Christophe, and to laugh over it. Graillot criticized everything, and everything anybody tried to do: he made every plan come to nothing. Joussier was for ever affirming, for he was unwilling ever to be in the wrong. He would be perfectly aware of the inherent weakness of his line of argument, but that would make him only the more obstinate in sticking to it: he would have sacrificed the victory of his cause to his pride of principle. But he would rush from extremes of bullet-headed faith to extremes of ironical pessimism, when he would bitterly condemn the lie of all systems of ideas and the futility of all efforts.

The majority of the working-classes were just the same. They would suddenly relapse from the intoxication of words into the depths of discouragement. They had immense illusions: but they were based upon nothing: they had not won them in pain or forged them for themselves: they had received them ready-made, by that law of the smallest effort which led them for their amusements to the slaughter-house and the blatant show. They suffered from an incurable indolence of mind for which there were only too many excuses: they were like weary beasts asking only to be suffered to lie down and in peace to ruminate over their end and their dreams. But once they had

slept off their dreams there was nothing left but an even greater weariness and the doleful dumps. They were for ever flaring up to a new leader: and very soon they became suspicious of him and spurned him. The sad part of it all was that they were never wrong: one after another their leaders were dazzled by the bait of wealth, success, or vanity: for one Joussier, who was kept from temptation by the consumption under which he was wasting away, a brave crumbling to death, how many leaders were there who betrayed the people or grew weary of the fight! They were victims of the secret sore which was devouring the politicians of every party in those days: demoralization through women and money, women and money,—(the two scourges are one and the same).—In the Government as in the ministry there were men of first-rate talent, men who had in them the stuff of which great statesmen are made—(they might have been great statesmen in the days of Richelieu, perhaps);—but they lacked faith and character: the need, the habit, the weariness of pleasure, had sapped them: when they were engaged upon vast schemes they fumbled into incoherent action, or they would suddenly fling up the whole thing, while important business was in progress, desert their country or their cause for rest and pleasure. They were brave enough to meet death in battle: but very few of the leaders were capable of dying in harness, at their posts, never budging, with their hands upon the rudder and their eyes unswervingly fixed upon the invisible goal.

The revolution was hamstrung by the consciousness of the fundamental weakness. The leaders of the working-classes spent part of their time in blaming each other. Their strikes always failed as a result of the perpetual dissensions between the leaders and the trades-unions, between the reformers and the revolutionaries—and of the profound timidity that underlay their blustering threats—and of the inherited sheepishness that made the rebels creep once more beneath the yoke upon the first legal sentence,—and of the cowardly egoism and the baseness of those who profited by the revolt of others to creep a little nearer the masters, to curry favor and win a rich reward for their disinterested devotion. Not to speak of the disorder inherent in all crowds, the anarchy of the people. They tried hard to create corporate strikes which should assume a revolutionary character:

but they were not willing to be treated as revolutionaries. They had no liking for bayonets. They fancied that it was possible to make an omelette without eggs. In any case, they preferred the eggs to be broken by other people.

Olivier watched, observed, and was not surprised. From the very outset he had recognized the great inferiority of these men to the work which they were supposed to be accomplishing: but he had also recognized the inevitable force that swept them on: and he saw that Christophe, unknown to himself, was being carried on by the stream. But the current would have nothing to do with himself, who would have asked nothing better than to let himself be carried away.

It was a strong current: it was sweeping along an enormous mass of passions, interest, and faith, all jostling, pushing, merging into each other, boiling and frothing and eddying this way and that. The leaders were in the van; they were the least free of all, for they were pushed forward, and perhaps they had the least faith of all: there had been a time when they believed: they were like the priests against whom they had so loudly railed, imprisoned by their vows, by the faith they once had had, and were forced to profess to the bitter end. Behind them the common herd was brutal, vacillating, and short-sighted. The great majority had a sort of random faith, because the current had now set in the direction of Utopia: but a little while, and they would cease to believe because the current had changed. Many believed from a need of action, a desire for adventure, from romantic folly. Others believed from a sort of impertinent logic, which was stripped of all common sense. Some believed from goodness of heart. The self-seeking only made use of ideas as weapons for the fight: their eye was for the main chance: they were fighting for a definite sum as wages for a definite number of hours' work. The worst of all were nursing a secret hope of wreaking a brutal revenge for the wretched lives they had led.

But the current which bore them all along was wiser than they: it knew where it was going. What did it matter that at any moment it might dash up against the dyke of the Old World! Olivier foresaw that a social revolution in these days would be squashed. But he knew also that revolution would achieve its end through defeat as well as through victory: for

the oppressors only accede to the demands of the oppressed when the oppressed inspire them with fear. And so the violence of the revolutionaries was of no less service to their cause than the justice of that cause. Both violence and justice were part and parcel of the plan of that blind and certain force which moves the herd of human kind. . . .

"For consider what you are, you whom the Master has summoned. If the body be considered there are not many among you who are wise, or strong, or noble. But He has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and He has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong: and He has chosen the vile things of the world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to the destruction of those things that are. . . ."

And yet, whatever may be the Master who orders all things,—(Reason or Unreason),—and although the social organization prepared by syndicalism might constitute a certain comparative stage in progress for the future, Olivier did not think it worth while for Christophe and himself to scatter the whole of their power of illusion and sacrifice in this earthy combat which would open no new world. His mystic hopes of the revolution were dashed to the ground. The people seemed to him no better and hardly any more sincere than the other classes: there was not enough difference between them and others. In the midst of the torrent of interests and muddy passions, Olivier's gaze and heart were attracted by the little islands of independent spirits, the little groups of true believers who emerged here and there like flowers on the face of the waters. In vain do the elect seek to mingle with the mob: the elect always come together,—the elect of all classes and all parties,—the bearers of the fire of the world. And it is their sacred duty to see to it that the fire in their hands shall never die down.

Olivier had already made his choice.

A few houses away from that in which he lived was a cobbler's booth, standing a little below the level of the street,—a few planks nailed together, with dirty windows and panes of paper.

It was entered by three steps down, and you had to stoop to stand up in it. There was just room for a shelf of old shoes, and two stools. All day long, in accordance with the classic tradition of cobbling, the master of the place could be heard singing. He used to whistle, drum on the soles of the boots, and in a husky voice roar out coarse ditties and revolutionary songs, or chaff the women of the neighborhood as they passed by. A magpie with a broken wing, which was always hopping about on the pavement, used to come from a porter's lodge and pay him a visit. It would stand on the first step at the entrance to the booth and look at the cobbler. He would stop for a moment to crack a dirty joke with the bird in a piping voice, or he would insist on whistling the *Internationale.* The bird would stand with its beak in the air, listening gravely: every now and then it would bob with its beak down by way of salutation, and it would awkwardly flap its wings in order to regain its balance: then it would suddenly turn round, leaving the cobbler in the middle of a sentence, and fly away with its wing and a bit on to the back of a bench, from whence it would hurl defiance at the dogs of the quarter. Then the cobbler would return to his leather, and the flight of his auditor would by no means restrain him from going through with his harangue.

He was fifty-six, with a jovial wayward manner, little merry eyes under enormous eyebrows, with a bald top to his head rising like an egg out of the nest of his hair, hairy ears, a black gap-toothed mouth that gaped like a well when he roared with laughter, a very thick dirty beard, at which he used to pluck in handfuls with his long nails that were always filthy with wax. He was known in the district as Daddy Feuillet, or Feuillette, or Daddy la Feuillette—and to tease him they used to call him La Fayette: for politically the old fellow was one of the reds: as a young man he had been mixed up in the Commune, sentenced to death, and finally deported: he was proud of his memories, and was always rancorously inclined to lump together Badinguet, Galliffet, and Foutriquet. He was a regular attendant at the revolutionary meetings, and an ardent admirer of Coquard and the vengeful idea that he was always prophesying with much beard-wagging and a voice of thunder. He never missed one of his speeches, drank in his words, laughed at his jokes with

head thrown back and gaping mouth, foamed at his invective, and rejoiced in the fight and the promised paradise. Next day, in his booth, he would read over the newspaper report of the speeches: he would read them aloud to himself and his apprentice: and to taste their full sweetness he would have them read aloud to him, and used to box his apprentice's ears if he skipped a line. As a consequence he was not always very punctual in the delivery of his work when he had promised it: on the other hand, his work was always sound: it might wear out the user's feet, but there was no wearing out his leather. . . .

The old fellow had in his shop a grandson of thirteen, a hunchback, a sickly, rickety boy, who used to run his errands, and was a sort of apprentice. The boy's mother had left her family when she was seventeen to elope with a worthless fellow who had sunk into hooliganism, and before very long had been caught, sentenced, and so disappeared from the scene. She was left alone with the child, deserted by her family, and devoted herself to the upbringing of the boy Emmanuel. She had transferred to him all the love and hatred she had had for her lover. She was a woman of a violent and jealous character, morbid to a degree. She loved her child to distraction, brutally ill-treated him, and, when he was ill, was crazed with despair. When she was in a bad temper she would send him to bed without any dinner, without so much as a piece of bread. When she was dragging him along through the streets, if he grew tired and would not go on and slipped down to the ground, she would kick him on to his feet again. She was amazingly incoherent in her use of words, and she used to pass swiftly from tears to a hysterical mood of gaiety. She died. The cobbler took the boy, who was then six years old. He loved him dearly: but he had his own way of showing it, which consisted in bullying the boy, battering him with a large assortment of insulting names, pulling his ears, and clouting him over the head from morning to night by way of teaching him his job: and at the same time he grounded him thoroughly in his own social and anti-clerical catechism.

Emmanuel knew that his grandfather was not a bad man: but he was always prepared to raise his arm to ward off his blows: the old fellow used to frighten him, especially on the evenings when he got drunk. For Daddy la Feuillette had not come by

his nickname for nothing: he used to get tipsy twice or thrice a month: then he used to talk all over the place, and laugh, and act the swell, and always in the end he used to give the boy a good thrashing. His bark was worse than his bite. But the boy was terrified: his ill-health made him more sensitive than other children: he was precociously intelligent, and he had inherited a fierce and unbalanced capacity for feeling from his mother. He was overwhelmed by his grandfather's brutality, and also by his revolutionary harangues,—(for the two things went together: it was particularly when the old man was drunk that he was inclined to hold forth).—His whole being quivered in response to outside impressions, just as the booth shook with the passing of the heavy omnibuses. In his crazy imagination there were mingled, like the humming vibrations of a belfry, his day-to-day sensations, the wretchedness of his childhood, his deplorable memories of premature experience, stories of the Commune, scraps of evening lectures and newspaper feuilletons, speeches at meetings, and the vague, uneasy, and violent sexual instincts which his parents had transmitted to him. All these things together formed a monstrous grim dream-world, from the dense night, the chaos and miasma of which there darted dazzling rays of hope.

The cobbler used sometimes to drag his apprentice with him to Amélie's restaurant. There it was that Olivier noticed the little hunchback with the voice of a lark. Sitting and never talking to the workpeople, he had had plenty of time to study the boy's sickly face, with its jutting brow and shy, humiliated expression: he had heard the coarse jokes that had been thrown at the boy, jokes which were met with silence and a faint shuddering tremor. During certain revolutionary utterances he had seen the boy's soft brown eyes light up with the chimerical ecstasy of the future happiness,—a happiness which, even if he were ever to realize it, would make but small difference in his stunted life. At such moments his expression would illuminate his ugly face in such a way as to make its ugliness forgotten. Even the fair Berthe was struck by it; one day she told him of it, and, without a word of warning, kissed him on the lips. The boy started back: he went pale and shuddering, and flung away in disgust. The young woman had no time to notice him: she

was already quarreling with Joussier. Only Olivier observed Emmanuel's uneasiness: he followed the boy with his eyes, and saw him withdraw into the shadow with his hands trembling, head down, looking down at the floor, and darting glances of desire and irritation at the girl. Olivier went up to him, spoke to him gently and politely and soothed him. . . . Who can tell all that gentleness can bring to a heart deprived of all consideration? It is like a drop of water falling upon parched earth, greedily to be sucked up. It needed only a few words, a smile, for the boy Emmanuel in his heart of hearts to surrender to Olivier, and to determine to have Olivier for his friend. Thereafter, when he met him in the street and discovered that they were neighbors, it seemed to him to be a mysterious sign from Fate that he had not been mistaken. He used to watch for Olivier to pass the booth, and say good-day to him: and if ever Olivier were thinking of other things and did not glance in his direction, then Emmanuel would be hurt and sore.

It was a great day for him when Olivier came into Daddy Feuillette's shop to leave an order. When the work was done Emmanuel took it to Olivier's rooms; he had watched for him to come home so as to be sure of finding him in. Olivier was lost in thought, hardly noticed him, paid the bill, and said nothing: the boy seemed to wait, looked from right to left, and began reluctantly to move away. Olivier, in his kindness, guessed what was happening inside the boy: he smiled and tried to talk to him in spite of the awkwardness he always felt in talking to any of the people. But now he was able to find words simple and direct. An intuitive perception of suffering made him see in the boy—(rather too simply)—a little bird wounded by life, like himself, seeking consolation with his head under his wing, sadly huddled up on his perch, dreaming of wild flights into the light. A feeling that was something akin to instinctive confidence brought the boy closer to him: he felt the attraction of the silent soul, which made no moan and used no harsh words, a soul wherein he could take shelter from the brutality of the streets; and the room, thronged with books, filled with bookcases wherein there slumbered the dreams of the ages, filled him with an almost religious awe. He made no attempt to evade Olivier's questions: he replied readily, with sudden gasps and

starts of shyness and pride: but he had no power of expression. Carefully, patiently, Olivier unswathed his obscure stammering soul: little by little he was able to read his hopes and his absurdly touching faith in the new birth of the world. He had no desire to laugh, though he knew that the dream was impossible, and would never change human nature. The Christians also have dreamed of impossible things, and they have not changed human nature. From the time of Pericles to the time of M. Fallières when has there been any moral progress? . . . But all faith is beautiful: and when the light of an old faith dies down it is meet to salute the kindling of the new: there will never be too many. With a curious tenderness Olivier saw the uncertain light gleaming in the boy's mind. What a strange mind it was! . . . Olivier was not altogether able to follow the movement of his thoughts, which were incapable of any sustained effort of reason, progressing in hops and jerks, and lagging behind in conversation, unable to follow, clutching in some strange way at an image called up by a word spoken some time before, then suddenly catching up, rushing ahead, weaving a commonplace thought or an ordinary cautious phrase into an enchanted world, a crazy and heroic creed. The boy's soul, slumbering and waking by fits and starts, had a puerile and mighty need of optimism: to every idea in art or science thrown out to it, it would add some complacently melodramatic tag, which would link it up with and satisfy its own chimerical dreams.

As an experiment Olivier tried reading aloud to the boy on Sundays. He thought that he was most likely to be interested by realistic and familiar stories: he read him Tolstoy's *Memories of Childhood*. They made no impression on the boy: he said:

"That's quite all right. Things are like that. One knows that."

And he could not understand why anybody should take so much trouble to write about real things. . . .

"He's just a boy," he would say disdainfully, "just an ordinary little boy."

He was no more responsive to the interest of history: and science bored him: it was to him no more than a tiresome intro-

duction to a fairy-tale: the invisible forces brought into the service of man were like terrible genii laid low. What was the use of so much explanation? When a man finds something it is no good his telling how he found it, he need only tell what it is that he has found. The analysis of thought is a luxury of the upper-classes. The souls of the people demand synthesis, ideas ready-made, well or ill, or rather ill-made than well, but all tending to action, and composed of the gross realities of life, and charged with electricity. Of all the literature open to Emmanuel that which most nearly touched him was the epic pathos of certain passages in Hugo and the fuliginous rhetoric of the revolutionary orators, whom he did not rightly understand, characters who no more understood themselves than Hugo did. To him as to them the world was not an incoherent collection of reasons or facts, but an infinite space, steeped in darkness and quivering with light, while through the night there passed the beating of mighty wings all bathed in the sunlight. Olivier tried in vain to make him grasp his cultivated logic. The boy's rebellious and weary soul slipped through his fingers: and it sank back with a sigh of comfort and relief into the indeterminate haze and the chafing of its own sensation and hallucinations, like a woman in love giving herself with eyes closed to her lover.

Olivier was at once attracted and disconcerted by the qualities in the child so much akin to his own:—loneliness, proud weakness, idealistic ardor,—and so very different,—the unbalanced mind, the blind and unbridled desires, the savage sensuality which had no idea of good and evil, as they are defined in ordinary morality. He had only a partial glimpse of that sensuality which would have terrified him had he known its full extent. He never dreamed of the existence of the world of uneasy passions stirring and seething in the heart and mind of his little friend. Our bourgeois atavism has given us too much wisdom. We dare not even look within ourselves. If we were to tell a hundredth part of the dreams that come to an ordinary honest man, or of the desires which come into being in the body of a chaste woman, there would be a scandal and an outcry. Silence such monsters! Bolt and bar their cage! But let us admit that they exist, and that in the souls of the young

they are insecurely fettered.—The boy had all the erotic desires and dreams which we agree among ourselves to regard as perverse: they would suddenly rise up unawares and take him by the throat: they would come in gusts and squalls: and they only gained in intensity and heat through the irritation set up by the isolation to which his ugliness condemned him. Olivier knew nothing of all this. Emmanuel was ashamed in his presence. He felt the contagion of such peace and purity. The example of such a life was a taming influence upon him. The boy felt a passionate love for Olivier. And his suppressed passions rushed headlong into tumultuous dreams of human happiness, social brotherhood, fantastic aviation, wild barbaric poetry—a whole heroic, erotic, childish, splendid, vulgar world in which his intelligence and his will were tossed hither and thither in mental loafing and fever.

He did not have much time for indulging himself in this way, especially in his grandfather's booth, for the old man was never silent for a minute on end, but was always whistling, hammering, and talking from morning to night; but there is always room for dreams. How many voyages of the mind one can make standing up with wide-open eyes in the space of a second!—Manual labor is fairly well suited to intermittent thought. The working-man's mind would be hard put to it without an effort of the will to follow a closely reasoned chain of argument: if he does manage to do so he is always certain to miss a link here and there: but in the intervals of rhythmic movement ideas crop up and mental images come floating to the surface: the regular movements of the body send them flying upwards like sparks under the smith's bellows. The thought of the people! It is just smoke and fire, a shower of glittering sparks fading away, glowing, then fading away once more! But sometimes a spark will be carried away by the wind to set fire to the dried forests and the fat ricks of the upper-classes. . . .

Olivier procured Emmanuel a place in a printing house. It was the boy's wish, and his grandfather did not oppose it; he was glad to see his grandson better educated than himself, and he had a great respect for printer's ink. In his new trade the boy found his work more exhausting than in the old: but he felt more free to think among the throng of workers than

in the little shop where he used to sit alone with his grandfather.

The best time of day was the dinner hour. He would escape and get right away from the horde of artisans crowding round the little tables on the pavement and into the wineshops of the district, and limp along to the square hard by: and there he would sit astride a bench under a spreading chestnut-tree, near a bronze dancing faun with grapes in his hands, and untie his brown-paper parcel of bread and meat, and munch it slowly, surrounded by a little crowd of sparrows. Over the green turf little fountains spread the trickling web of their soft rain. Round-eyed, slate-blue pigeons cooed in a sunlit tree. And all about him was the perpetual hum of Paris, the roar of the carriages, the surging sea of footsteps, the familiar street-cries, the gay distant whistle of a china-mender, a navvy's hammer ringing out on the cobblestones, the noble music of a fountain—all the fevered golden trappings of the Parisian dream.—And the little hunchback, sitting astride his bench, with his mouth full, never troubling to swallow, would drowse off into a delicious torpor, in which he lost all consciousness of his twisted spine and his craven soul, and was all steeped in an indeterminate intoxicating happiness.

" . . . Soft warm light, sun of justice that art to shine for us to-morrow, art thou not shining now? It is all so good, so beautiful! We are rich, we are strong, we are hale, we love . . . I love, I love all men, all men love me. . . . Ah! How splendid it all is! How splendid it will be to-morrow! . . ."

The factory hooters would sound: the boy would come to his senses, swallow down his mouthful, take a long drink at the Wallace fountain near by, slip back into his hunchbacked shell, and go limping and hobbling back to his place in the printing works in front of the cases of magic letters which would one day write the *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,* of the Revolution.

Daddy Feuillet had a crony, Trouillot, the stationer on the other side of the street. He kept a stationery and haberdashery shop, in the windows of which were displayed pink and green bonbons in green bottles, and pasteboard dolls without arms or

legs. From either side of the street, one standing on his doorstep, the other in his shop, the two old men used to exchange winks and nods and a whole elaborate code of pantomimic gesture. At intervals, when the cobbler was tired of hammering, and had, as he used to say, the cramp in his buttocks, they would hail each other, La Feuillette in his shrill treble, Trouillot with a muffled roar, like a husky calf; and they would go off together and take a nip at a neighboring bar. They were never in any hurry to return. They were both infernally loquacious. They had known each other for half a century. The stationer also had played a little walking-on part in the great melodrama of 1871. To see the fat placid creature with his black cap on his head and his white blouse, and his gray, heavy-dragoon mustache, and his dull light-blue bloodshot eyes with heavy pouches under the lids, and his flabby shining cheeks, always in a perspiration, slow-footed, gouty, out of breath, heavy of speech, no one would ever have thought it. But he had lost none of the illusions of the old days. He had spent some years as a refugee in Switzerland, where he had met comrades of all nations, notably many Russians, who had initiated him in the beauties of anarchic brotherhood. On that point he disagreed with La Feuillette, who was a proper Frenchman, an adherent of the strong line and of absolutism in freedom. For the rest, they were equally firm in their belief in the social revolution and the working-class *salente* of the future. Each was devoted to a leader in whose person he saw incarnate the ideal man that each would have liked to be. Trouillot was for Joussier, La Feuillette for Coquard. They used to engage in interminable arguments about the points on which they were divided, being quite confident that the thoughts upon which they agreed were definitely decided;—(and they were so sure of their common ground that they were never very far from believing, in their cups, that it was a matter of hard fact).—The cobbler was the more argumentative of the two. He believed as a matter of reason: or at least he flattered himself that he did, for, Heaven knows, his reason was of a very peculiar kind, and could have fitted the foot of no other man. However, though he was less skilled in argument than in cobbling, he was always insisting that other minds should be shod to his own measure. The stationer was more indolent and

less combative, and never worried about proving his faith. A man only tries to prove what he doubts himself. He had no doubt. His unfailing optimism always made him see things as he wanted to see them, and not see things or forget them immediately when they were otherwise. Whether he did so wilfully or from apathy he saved himself from trouble of any sort: experience to the contrary slipped off his hide without leaving a mark.—The two of them were romantic babies with no sense of reality, and the revolution, the mere sound of the name of which was enough to make them drunk, was only a jolly story they told themselves, and never knew whether it would ever happen, or whether it had actually happened. And the two of them firmly believed in the God of Humanity merely by the transposition of the habits they had inherited from their forbears, who for centuries had bowed before the Son of Man.—It goes without saying that both men were anti-clerical.

The amusing part of it was that the honest stationer lived with a very pious niece who did just what she liked with him. She was a very dark little woman, plump, with sharp eyes and a gift of volubility spiced with a strong Marseilles accent, and she was the widow of a clerk in the Department of Commerce. When she was left alone with no money, with a little girl, and received a home with her uncle, the common little creature gave herself airs, and was more than a little inclined to think that she was doing her shop-keeping relation a great favor by serving in his shop: she reigned there with the airs of a fallen queen, though, fortunately for her uncle's business and his customers, her arrogance was tempered by her natural exuberance and her need of talking. As befitted a person of her distinction, Madame Alexandrine was royalist and clerical, and she used to parade her feelings with a zeal that was all the more indiscreet as she took a malicious delight in teasing the old miscreant in whose house she had taken up her abode. She had set herself up as mistress of the house, and regarded herself as responsible for the conscience of the whole household: if she was unable to convert her uncle—(she had vowed to capture him *in extremis*),—she busied herself to her heart's content with sprinkling the devil with holy water. She fixed pictures of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Anthony of Padua on the walls: she

decorated the mantelpiece with little painted images in glass cases: and in the proper season she made a little chapel of the months of Mary with little blue candles in her daughter's bedroom. It was impossible to tell which was the predominant factor in her aggressive piety, real affection for the uncle she desired to convert or a wicked joy in worrying the old man.

He put up with it apathetically and sleepily: he preferred not to run the risk of rousing the tempestuous ire of his terrible niece: it was impossible to fight against such a wagging tongue: he desired peace above all things. Only once did he lose his temper, and that was when a little Saint Joseph made a surreptitious attempt to creep into his room and take up his stand above his bed: on this point he gained the day: for he came very near to having an apoplectic fit, and his niece was frightened: she did not try the experiment again. For the rest he gave in, and pretended not to see: the odor of sanctity made him feel very uncomfortable: but he tried not to think of it. On the other hand they were at one in pampering the girl, little Reine, or Rainette.

She was twelve or thirteen, and was always ill. For some months past she had been on her back with hip disease, with the whole of one side of her body done up in plaster of Paris like a little Daphne in her shell. She had eyes like a hurt dog's, and her skin was pallid and pale like a plant grown out of the sun: her head was too big for her body, and her fair hair, which was very soft and very tightly drawn back, made it appear even bigger: but she had an expressive and sweet face, a sharp little nose, and a childlike expression. The mother's piety had assumed in the child, in her sickness and lack of interest, a fervid character. She used to spend hours in telling her beads, a string of corals, blessed by the Pope: and she would break off in her prayers to kiss it passionately. She did next to nothing all day long: needlework made her tired: Madame Alexandrine had not given her a taste for it. She did little more than read a few insipid tracts, or a stupid miraculous story, the pretentious and bald style of which seemed to her the very flower of poetry,—or the criminal reports illustrated in color in the Sunday papers which her stupid mother used to give her. She would perhaps do a little crochet-work, moving her lips, and paying less atten-

tion to her needle than to the conversation she would hold with some favorite saint or even with God Himself. For it is useless to pretend that it is necessary to be Joan of Arc to have such visitations: every one of us has had them. Only, as a rule, our celestial visitors leave the talking to us as we sit by the fireside: and they say never a word. Rainette never dreamed of taking exception to it: silence gives consent. Besides, she had so much to tell them that she hardly gave them time to reply: she used to answer for them. She was a silent chatterer: she had inherited her mother's volubility: but her fluency was drawn off in inward speeches like a stream disappearing underground.—Of course she was a party to the conspiracy against her uncle with the object of procuring his conversion: she rejoiced over every inch of the house wrested by the spirit of light from the spirit of darkness: and on more than one occasion she had sewn a holy medallion on to the inside of the lining of the old man's coat or had slipped into one of his pockets the bead of a rosary, which her uncle, in order to please her, had pretended not to notice.—This seizure by the two pious women of the bitter foe of the priests was a source of indignation and joy to the cobbler. He had an inexhaustible store of coarse pleasantries on the subject of women who wear breeches: and he used to jeer at his friend for letting himself be under their thumb. As a matter of fact he had no right to scoff: for he had himself been afflicted for twenty years with a shrewish cross-grained wife, who had always regarded him as an old scamp and had taken him down a peg or two. But he was always careful not to mention her. The stationer was a little ashamed, and used to defend himself feebly, and in a mealy voice profess a Kropotkinesque gospel of tolerance.

Rainette and Emmanuel were friends. They had seen each other every day ever since they were children. To be quite accurate, Emmanuel only rarely ventured to enter the house. Madame Alexandrine used to regard him with an unfavorable eye as the grandson of an unbeliever and a horrid little dwarf. But Rainette used to spend the day on a sofa near the window on the ground floor. Emmanuel used to tap at the window as he passed, and, flattening his nose against the panes, he would make a face by way of greeting. In summer, when the window

was left open, he would stop and lean his arms on the window-sill, which was a little high for him;—(he fancied that this attitude was flattering to himself and that, his shoulders being shrugged up in such a pose of intimacy, it might serve to disguise his actual deformity);—and they would talk. Rainette did not have too many visitors, and she never noticed that Emmanuel was hunchbacked. Emmanuel, who was afraid and mortified in the presence of girls, made an exception in favor of Rainette. The little invalid, who was half petrified, was to him something intangible and far removed, something almost outside existence. Only on the evening when the fair Berthe kissed him on the lips, and the next day too, he avoided Rainette with an instinctive feeling of repulsion: he passed the house without stopping and hung his head: and he prowled about far away, fearfully and suspiciously, like a pariah dog. Then he returned. There was so little woman in her! As he was passing on his way home from the works, trying to make himself as small as possible among the bookbinders in their long working-blouses like night-gowns—busy merry young women whose hungry eyes stripped him as he passed,—how eagerly he would scamper away to Rainette's window! He was grateful for his little friend's infirmity: with her he could give himself airs of superiority and even be a little patronizing. With a little swagger he would tell her about the things that happened in the street and always put himself in the foreground. Sometimes in gallant mood he would bring Rainette a little present, roast chestnuts in winter, a handful of cherries in summer. And she used to give him some of the multi-colored sweets that filled the two glass jars in the shop-window: and they would pore over picture postcards together. Those were happy moments: they could both forget the pitiful bodies in which their childish souls were held captive.

But sometimes they would begin to talk, like their elders, of politics and religion. Then they would become as stupid as their elders. It put an end to their sympathy and understanding. She would talk of miracles and the nine days' devotion, or of pious images tricked out with paper lace, and of days of indulgence. He used to tell her that it was all folly and mummery, as he had heard his grandfather say. But when he in turn tried to tell her about the public meetings to which the old

man had taken him, and the speeches he had heard, she would stop him contemptuously and tell him that all such folk were drunken sots. Bitterness would creep into their talk. They would get talking about their relations: they would recount the insulting things that her mother and his grandfather had said of each other respectively. Then they would talk about themselves. They tried to say disagreeable things to each other. They managed that without much difficulty. They indulged in coarse gibes. But she was always the more malicious of the two. Then he would go away: and when he returned he would tell her that he had been with other girls, and how pretty they were, and how they had joked and laughed, and how they were going to meet again next Sunday. She would say nothing to that: she used to pretend to despise what he said: and then, suddenly, she would grow angry, and throw her crochet-work at his head, and shout at him to go, and declare that she loathed him: and she would hide her face in her hands. He would leave her on that, not at all proud of his victory. He longed to pull her thin little hands away from her face and to tell her that it was not true. But his pride would not suffer him to return.

One day Rainette had her revenge.—He was with some of the other boys at the works. They did not like him because he used to hold as much aloof from them as possible and never spoke, or talked too well, in a naïvely pretentious way, like a book, or rather like a newspaper article—(he was stuffed with newspaper articles).—That day they had begun to talk of the revolution and the days to come. He waxed enthusiastic and made a fool of himself. One of his comrades brought him up sharp with these brutal words:

"To begin with, you won't be wanted, you're too ugly. In the society of the future, there won't be any hunchbacks. They'll be drowned at birth."

That brought him toppling down from his lofty eloquence. He stopped short, dumfounded. The others roared with laughter. All that afternoon he went about with clenched teeth. In the evening he was going home, hurrying back to hide away in a corner alone with his suffering. Olivier met him: he was struck by his downcast expression: he guessed that he was suffering.

"You are hurt. Why?"

Emmanuel refused to answer. Olivier pressed him kindly. The boy persisted in his silence: but his jaw trembled as though he were on the point of weeping. Olivier took his arm and led him back to his rooms. Although he too had the cruel and instinctive feeling of repulsion from ugliness and disease that is in all who are not born with the souls of sisters of charity, he did not let it appear.

"Some one has hurt you?"

"Yes."

"What did they do?"

The boy laid bare his heart. He said that he was ugly. He said that his comrades had told him that their revolution was not for him.

"It is not for them, either, my boy, nor for us. It is not a single day's affair. It is all for those who will come after us."

The boy was taken aback by the thought that it would be so long deferred.

"Don't you like to think that people are working to give happiness to thousands of boys like yourself, to millions of human beings?"

Emmanuel sighed and said:

"But it would be good to have a little happiness oneself."

"My dear boy, you mustn't be ungrateful. You live in the most beautiful city, in an age that is most rich in marvels; you are not a fool, and you have eyes to see. Think of all the things there are to be seen and loved all around you."

He pointed out a few things.

The boy listened, nodded his head, and said:

"Yes, but I've got to face the fact that I shall always have to live in this body of mine!"

"Not at all. You will quit it."

"And that will be the end."

"How do you know that?"

The boy was aghast. Materialism was part and parcel of his grandfather's creed: he thought that it was only the priest-ridden prigs who believed in an eternal life. He knew that his friend was not such a one: and he wondered if Olivier could be speaking seriously. But Olivier held his hand and expounded at length his idealistic faith, and the unity of boundless life,

that has neither beginning nor end, in which all the millions of creatures and all the million million moments of time are but rays of the sun, the sole source of it all. But he did not put it to him in such an abstract form. Instinctively, when he talked to the boy, he adapted himself to his mode of thought;—ancient legends, the material and profound fancies of old cosmogonies were called to mind: half in fun, half in earnest, he spoke of metempsychosis and the succession of countless forms through which the soul passes and flows, like a spring passing from pool to pool. All this was interspersed with reminiscences of Christianity and images taken from the summer evening, the light of which was cast upon them both. He was sitting by the open window, and the boy was standing by his side, and their hands were clasped. It was a Saturday evening. The bells were ringing. The earliest swallows, only just returned, were skimming the walls of the houses. The dim sky was smiling above the city, which was wrapped in shadow. The boy held his breath and listened to the fairy-tale his man friend was telling him. And Olivier, warmed by the eagerness of his young hearer, was caught up by the interest of his own stories.

There are decisive moments in life when, just as the electric lights suddenly flash out in the darkness of a great city, so the eternal fires flare up in the darkness of the soul. A spark darting from another soul is enough to transmit the Promethean fire to the waiting soul. On that spring evening Olivier's calm words kindled the light that never dies in the mind hidden in the boy's deformed body, as in a battered lantern. He understood none of Olivier's arguments: he hardly heard them. But the legends and images which were only beautiful stories and parables to Olivier, took living shape and form in his mind, and were most real. The fairy-tale lived, moved, and breathed all around him. And the view framed in the window of the room, the people passing in the street, rich and poor, the swallows skimming the walls, the jaded horses dragging their loads along, the stones of the houses drinking in the cool shadow of the twilight, and the pale heavens where the light was dying—all the outside world was softly imprinted on his mind, softly as a kiss. It was but the flash of a moment. Then the light died down. He thought of Rainette, and said:

"But the people who go to Mass, the people who believe in God, are all cracked, aren't they?"

Olivier smiled.

"They believe," he said, "as we do. We all believe the same thing. Only their belief is less than ours. They are people who have to shut all the shutters and light the lamp before they can see the light. They see God in the shape of a man. We have keener eyes. But the light that we love is the same."

The boy went home through the dark streets in which the gas-lamps were not yet lit. Olivier's words were ringing in his head. He thought that it was as cruel to laugh at people because they had weak eyes as because they were hunchbacked. And he thought that Rainette had very pretty eyes: and he thought that he had brought tears into them. He could not bear that. He turned and went across to the stationer's. The window was still a little open: and he thrust his head inside and called in a whisper:

"Rainette."

She did not reply.

"Rainette. I beg your pardon."

From the darkness came Rainette's voice, saying:

"Beast! I hate you."

"I'm sorry," he said.

He stopped. Then, on a sudden impulse, he said in an even softer whisper, uneasily, rather shamefacedly:

"You know, Rainette, I believe in God just as you do."

"Really?"

"Really."

He said it only out of generosity. But, as soon as he had said it, he began to believe it.

They stayed still and did not speak. They could not see each other. Outside the night was so fair, so sweet! . . . The little cripple murmured:

"How good it will be when one is dead!"

He could hear Rainette's soft breathing.

He said:

"Good-night, little one."

Tenderly came Rainette's voice:

"Good-night."

He went away comforted. He was glad that Rainette had forgiven him. And, in his inmost soul, the little sufferer was not sorry to think that he had been the cause of suffering to the girl.

Olivier had gone into retirement once more. It was not long before Christophe rejoined him. It was very certain that their place was not with the syndicalist movement: Olivier could not throw in his lot with such people. And Christophe would not. Olivier flung away from them in the name of the weak and the oppressed; Christophe in the name of the strong and the independent. But though they had withdrawn, one to the bows, the other to the stern, they were still traveling in the vessel which was carrying the army of the working-classes and the whole of society. Free and self-confident, Christophe watched with tingling interest the coalition of the proletarians: he needed every now and then to plunge into the vat of the people: it relaxed him: he always issued from it fresher and jollier. He kept up his relation with Coquard, and he went on taking his meals from time to time at Amélie's. When he was there he lost all self-control, and would whole-heartedly indulge his fantastic humor: he was not afraid of paradox: and he took a malicious delight in pushing his companions to the extreme consequences of their absurd and wild principles. They never knew whether he was speaking in jest or in earnest: for he always grew warm as he talked, and always in the end lost sight of the paradoxical point of view with which he had begun. The artist in him was carried away by the intoxication of the rest. In one such moment of esthetic emotion in Amélie's back-shop, he improvised a revolutionary song, which was at once tried, repeated, and on the very next day spread to every group of the working-classes. He compromised himself. He was marked by the police. Manousse, who was in touch with the innermost chambers of authority, was warned by one of his friends, Xavier Bernard, a young official in the police department, who dabbled in literature and expressed a violent admiration for Christophe's music:—(for dilettantism and the spirit of anarchy had spread even to the watch-dogs of the Third Republic).

"That Krafft of yours is making himself a nuisance," said

Bernard to Manousse. "He's playing the braggart. We know what it means: but I tell you that those in high places would be not at all sorry to catch a foreigner—what's more, a German—in a revolutionary plot: it is the regular method of discrediting the party and casting suspicion upon its doings. If the idiot doesn't look out we shall be obliged to arrest him. It's a bore. You'd better warn him."

Manousse did warn Christophe: Olivier begged him to be careful. Christophe did not take their advice seriously.

"Bah!" he said. "Everybody knows there's no harm in me. I've a perfect right to amuse myself. I like these people. They work as I do, and they have faith, and so have I. As a matter of fact, it isn't the same faith: we don't belong to the same camp. . . . Very well! We'll fight. Not that I don't like fighting. What would you? I can't do as you do, and stay curled up in my shell. I must breathe. I'm stifled by the comfortable classes."

Olivier, whose lungs were not so exacting, was quite at his ease in his small rooms with the tranquil society of his two women friends, though one of them, Madame Arnaud, had flung herself into charitable work, and the other, Cécile, was entirely taken up with looking after the baby, to such an extent that she could talk of nothing else and to nobody else, in that twittering, beatific tone which is an attempt to emulate the note of a little bird, and to mold its formless song into human speech.

His excursion into working-class circles had left him with two acquaintances. Two men of independent views, like himself. One of them, Guérin, was an upholsterer. He worked when he felt so disposed, capriciously, though he was very skilful. He loved his trade. He had a natural taste for artistic things, and had developed it by observation, work, and visits to museums. Olivier had commissioned him to repair an old piece of furniture: it was a difficult job, and the upholsterer had done it with great skill: he had taken a lot of time and trouble over it: he sent in a very modest bill to Olivier because he was so delighted with his success. Olivier became interested in him, questioned him about his life, and tried to find out what he thought of the working-class movement. Guérin had no thought

about it: he never worried about it. At bottom he did not belong to the working-class, or to any class. He read very little. All his intellectual development had come about through his senses, eyes, hands, and the taste innate in the true Parisian. He was a happy man. The type is by no means rare among the working people of the lower middle-class, who are one of the most intelligent classes in the nation: for they realize a fine balance between manual labor and healthy mental activity.

Olivier's other acquaintance was a man of a more original kind. He was a postman, named Hurteloup. He was a tall, handsome creature, with bright eyes, a little fair beard and mustache, and an open, merry expression. One day he came with a registered letter, and walked into Olivier's room. While Olivier was signing the receipt, he wandered round, looking at the books, with his nose thrust close up to their backs:

"Ha! Ha!" he said. "You have the classics. . . ."

He added:

"I collect books on history. Especially books about Burgundy."

"You are a Burgundian?" asked Olivier.

"*Bourguignon salé,*
L'épée au côté,
La barbe au menton,
Sante Bourguignon,"

replied the postman with a laugh. "I come from the Avallon country. I have family papers going back to 1200 and something. . . ."

Olivier was intrigued, and tried to find out more about him. Hurteloup asked nothing better than to be allowed to talk. He belonged, in fact, to one of the oldest families in Burgundy. One of his ancestors had been on crusade with Philippe Auguste: another had been secretary of State under Henri II. The family had begun to decay in the seventeenth century. At the time of the Revolution, ruined and despairing, they had taken the plunge into the ocean of the people. Now they were coming to the surface again as the result of honest work and the physical and moral vigor of Hurteloup the postman, and his fidelity to his race. His greatest hobby had been collecting his-

torical and genealogical documents relating to his family and their native country. In off hours he used to go to the Archives and copy out old papers. Whenever he did not understand them he would go and ask one of the people on his beat, a Chartist or a student at the Sorbonne, to explain. His illustrious ancestry did not turn his head: he would speak of it laughingly, with never a shade of embarrassment or of indignation at the hardness of fate. His careless sturdy gaiety was a delightful thing to see. And when Olivier looked at him he thought of the mysterious ebb and flow of the life of human families, which for centuries flows burningly, for centuries disappears under the ground, and then comes bubbling forth again, having gathered fresh energy from the depths of the earth. And the people seemed to him to be an immense reservoir into which the rivers of the past plunge, while the rivers of the future spring forth again, and, though they bear a new name, are sometimes the same as those of old.

He was in sympathy with both Guérin and Hurteloup: but it is obvious that they could not be company for him: between him and them there was no great possibility of conversation. The boy Emmanuel took up more of his time: he came now almost every evening. Since their magical talk together a revolution had taken place in the boy. He had plunged into reading with a fierce desire for knowledge. He would come back from his books bewildered and stupefied. Sometimes he seemed even less intelligent than before: he would hardly speak: Olivier could only get him to answer in monosyllables: the boy would make fatuous replies to his questions. Olivier would lose heart: he would try not to let it be seen: but he thought he had made a mistake, and that the boy was thoroughly stupid. He could not see the frightful fevered travail in incubation that was going on in the inner depths of the boy's soul. Besides, he was a bad teacher, and was more fitted to sow the good seed at random in the fields than to weed the soil and plow the furrows. Christophe's presence only served to increase the difficulty. Olivier felt a certain awkwardness in showing his young protégé to his friend: he was ashamed of Emmanuel's stupidity, which was raised to alarming proportions when Jean-Christophe was in the room. Then the boy would withdraw into bashful sul-

lenness. He hated Christophe because Olivier loved him: he could not bear any one else to have a place in his master's heart. Neither Christophe nor Olivier had any idea of the love and jealousy tugging at the boy's heart. And yet Christophe had been through it himself in old days. But he was unable to see himself in the boy who was fashioned of such different metal from that of which he himself was made. In the strange obscure combination of inherited taints, everything, love, hate, and latent genius, gave out an entirely different sound.

The First of May was approaching. A sinister rumor ran through Paris. The blustering leaders of the C.G.T. were doing their best to spread it. Their papers were announcing the coming of the great day, mobilizing the forces of the working-classes, and directing the word of terror upon the point in which the comfortable classes were mostly sensitive—namely, upon the stomach. . . . *Feri ventrem.* . . . They were threatening them with a general strike. The scared Parisians were leaving for the country or laying in provisions as against a siege. Christophe had met Canet, in his motor, carrying two hams and a sack of potatoes: he was beside himself: he did not in the least know to which party he belonged: he was in turn an old Republican, a royalist, and a revolutionary. His cult of violence was like a compass gone wrong, with the needle darting from north to south and from south to north. In public he still played the part of chorus to the wild speeches of his friends: but he would have taken *in petto* the first dictator who came along and swept away the red spectre.

Christophe was tickled to death by such universal cowardice. He was convinced that nothing would come of it all. Olivier was not so sure. His birth into the burgess-class had given him something of the inevitable and everlasting tremulation which the comfortable classes always feel upon the recollection or the expectation of Revolution.

"That's all right!" said Christophe. "You can sleep in peace. Your Revolution isn't going to happen to-morrow. You're all afraid. Afraid of being hurt. That sort of fear is everywhere. In the upper-classes, in the people, in every nation, in all the nations of the West. There's not enough blood

in the whole lot of them: they're afraid of spilling a little. For the last forty years all the fighting has been done in words, in newspaper articles. Just look at your old Dreyfus Affair. You shouted loud enough: 'Death! Blood! Slaughter!'. . . Oh! you Gascons! Spittle and ink! But how many drops of blood?"

"Don't you be so sure," said Olivier. "The fear of blood is a secret instinctive feeling that on the first shedding of it the beast in man will see red, and the brute will appear again under the crust of civilization: and God knows how it will ever be muzzled! Everybody hesitates to declare war: but when the war does come it will be a frightful thing."

Christophe shrugged his shoulders and said that it was not for nothing that the heroes of the age were lying heroes, Cyrano the braggart and the swaggering cock, Chantecler.

Olivier nodded. He knew that in France bragging is the beginning of action. However, he had no more faith than Christophe in an immediate movement: it had been too loudly proclaimed, and the Government was on its guard. There was reason to believe that the syndicalist strategists would postpone the fight for a more favorable opportunity.

During the latter half of April Olivier had an attack of influenza: he used to get it every winter about the same time, and it always used to develop into his old enemy, bronchitis. Christophe stayed with him for a few days. The attack was only a slight one, and soon passed. But, as usual, it left Olivier morally and physically worn out, and he was in this condition for some time after the fever had subsided. He stayed in bed, lying still for hours without any desire to get up or even to move: he lay there watching Christophe, who was sitting at his desk, working, with his back towards him.

Christophe was absorbed in his work. Sometimes, when he was tired of writing, he would suddenly get up and walk over to the piano: he would play, not what he had written, but just whatever came into his mind. Then there came to pass a very strange thing. While the music he had written was conceived in a style which recalled that of his earlier work, what he played was like that of another man. It was music of a world raucous

and uncontrolled. There were in it a disorder and a violence, and incoherence which had no resemblance at all to the powerful order and logic which were everywhere present in his other music. These unconsidered improvizations, escaping the scrutiny of his artistic conscience, sprang, like the cry of an animal, from the flesh rather than from the mind, and seemed to reveal a disturbance of the balance of his soul, a storm brewing in the depths of the future. Christophe was quite unconscious of it: but Olivier would listen, look at Christophe, and feel vaguely uneasy. In his weak condition he had a singular power of penetration, a far-seeing eye: he saw things that no other man could perceive.

Christophe thumped out a final chord and stopped all in a sweat, and looking rather haggard: he looked at Olivier, and there was still a troubled expression in his eyes; then he began to laugh, and went back to his desk. Olivier asked him:

"What was that, Christophe?"

"Nothing," replied Christophe. "I'm stirring the water to attract my fish."

"Are you going to write that?"

"That? What do you mean?"

"What you've just said."

"What did I say? I don't remember."

"What were you thinking of?"

"I don't know," said Christophe, drawing his hand across his forehead.

He went on writing. Silence once more filled the room. Olivier went on looking at Christophe. Christophe felt that he was looking, and turned. Olivier's eyes were upon him with such a hunger of affection!

"Lazy brute!" he said gaily.

Olivier sighed.

"What's the matter?" asked Christophe.

"Oh! Christophe! To think there are so many things in you, sitting there, close at hand, treasures that you will give to others, and I shall never be able to share! . . ."

"Are you mad? What's come to you?"

"I wonder what your life will be. I wonder what peril and sorrow you have still to go through. . . . I would like to follow

you. I would like to be with you. . . . But I shan't see anything of it all. I shall be left stuck stupidly by the wayside."

"Stupid? You are that. Do you think that I would leave you behind even if you wanted to be left?"

"You will forget me," said Olivier.

Christophe got up and went and sat on the bed by Olivier's side: he took his wrists, which were wet with a clammy sweat of weakness. His nightshirt was open at the neck, showing his weak chest, his too transparent skin, which was stretched and thin like a sail blown out by a puff of wind to rending point. Christophe's strong fingers fumbled as he buttoned the neckband of Olivier's nightshirt. Olivier suffered him.

"Dear Christophe!" he said tenderly. "Yet I have had one great happiness in my life!"

"Oh! what on earth are you thinking of?" said Christophe. "You're as well as I am."

"Yes," said Olivier.

"Then why talk nonsense?"

"I was wrong," said Olivier, ashamed and smiling. "Influenza is so depressing."

"Pull yourself together, though! Get up."

"Not now. Later on."

He stayed in bed, dreaming. Next day he got up. But he was only able to sit musing by the fireside. It was a mild and misty April. Through the soft veil of silvery mist the little green leaves were unfolding their cocoons, and invisible birds were singing the song of the hidden sun. Olivier wound the skein of his memories. He saw himself once more as a child, in the train carrying him away from his native town, through the mist, with his mother weeping. Antoinette was sitting by herself at the other end of the carriage. . . . Delicate shapes, fine landscapes, were drawn in his mind's eye. Lovely verses came of their own accord, with every syllable and charming rhythm in due order. He was near his desk: he had only to reach out his hand to take his pen and write down his poetic visions. But his will failed him: he was tired: he knew that the perfume of his dreams would evaporate so soon as he tried to catch and hold them. It was always so: the best of himself could never find expression: his mind was like a little valley full of flowers: but

hardly a soul had access to it: and as soon as they were picked the flowers faded. No more than just a few had been able languidly to survive, a few delicate little tales, a few pieces of verse, which all gave out a fragrant, fading scent. His artistic impotence had for a long time been one of Olivier's greatest griefs. It was so hard to feel so much life in himself and to be able to save none of it! . . .—Now he was resigned. Flowers do not need to be seen to blossom. They are only the more beautiful in the fields where no hand can pluck them. Happy, happy fields with flowers dreaming in the sun!—Here in the little valley there was hardly any sun; but Olivier's dreams flowered all the better for it. What stories he wove for his own delight in those days, stories sad and tender and fantastic! They came he knew not whence, sailing like white clouds in a summer sky, melted into thin air, and others followed them: he was full of them. Sometimes the sky was clear: in the light of it Olivier would sit drowsily until once more, with all sail set, there would come gliding the silent ships of dreams.

In the evening the little hunchback would come in. Olivier was so full of stories that he told him one, smiling, eager and engrossed in the tale. Often he would go on talking to himself, with the boy breathing never a word. In the end he would altogether forget his presence. . . . Christophe arrived in the middle of the story, and was struck by its beauty, and asked Olivier to begin all over again. Olivier refused:

"I am in the same position as yourself," he said. "I don't know anything about it."

"That is not true," said Christophe. "You're a regular Frenchman, and you always know exactly what you are doing and saying. You never forget anything."

"Alas!" said Olivier.

"Begin again, then."

"I'm too tired. What's the good?"

Christophe was annoyed.

"That's all wrong," he said. "What's the good of your having ideas? You throw away what you have. It's an utter waste."

"Nothing is ever lost," said Olivier.

The little hunchback started from the stillness he had main-

tained during Olivier's story—sitting with his face towards the window, with eyes blankly staring, and a frown on his face and a fierce expression so that it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. He got up and said:

"It will be fine to-morrow."

"I bet," said Christophe to Olivier, "that he didn't even listen."

"To-morrow, the First of May," Emmanuel went on, while his morose expression lighted up.

"That is his story," said Olivier. "You shall tell it me to-morrow."

"Nonsense!" said Christophe.

Next day Christophe called for Olivier to take him for a walk in Paris. Olivier was better: but he still had the same strange feeling of exhaustion: he did not want to go out, he had a vague fear, he did not like mixing with the crowd. His heart and mind were brave: but the flesh was weak. He was afraid of a crush, an affray, brutality of all sorts: he knew only too well that he was fated to be a victim, that he could not, even would not, defend himself: for he had as great a horror of giving pain as of suffering it himself. Men who are sick in body shudder away from physical suffering more readily than others, because they are more familiar with it, because they have less power to resist, and because it is presented more immediately and more poignantly to their heated imagination. Olivier was ashamed of this physical cowardice of his which was in entire contradiction to the stoicism of his will: and he tried hard to fight it down. But this morning the thought of human contact of any sort was painful to him, and he would gladly have remained indoors all day long. Christophe scolded him, rallied him, absolutely insisted on his going out and throwing off his stupor: for quite ten days he had not had a breath of air. Olivier pretended not to pay any attention. Christophe said:

"Very well. I'll go without you. I want to see their First of May. If I don't come back to-night, you will know that I have been locked up."

He went out. Olivier caught him up on the stairs. He would not leave Christophe to go alone.

There were very few people in the streets. A few little work-girls wearing sprays of lily-of-the-valley. Working-people in their Sunday clothes were walking about rather listlessly. At the street corners, and near the Métro stations were groups of policemen in plain clothes. The gates of the Luxembourg were closed. The weather was still foggy and damp. It was a long, long time since the sun had shown himself! . . . The friends walked arm in arm. They spoke but little, but they were very glad of each other. A few words were enough to call up all their tender memories of the intimate past. They stopped in front of a *mairie* to look at the barometer, which had an upward tendency.

"To-morrow," said Olivier, "I shall see the sun."

They were quite near the house where Cécile lived. They thought of going in and giving the baby a hug.

"No. We can do it when we come back."

On the other side of the river they began to fall in with more people. Just ordinary peaceful people taking a walk, wearing their Sunday clothes and faces; poor people with their babies: workmen loafing. A few here and there wore the red eglantine in their buttonholes: they looked quite inoffensive: they were revolutionaries by dint of self-persuasion: they were obviously quite benevolent and optimistic at heart, well satisfied with the smallest opportunities for happiness: whether it were fine or merely passable for their holiday, they were grateful for it . . . they did not know exactly to whom . . . to everything and everybody about them. They walked along without any hurry, expansively admiring the new leaves of the trees and the pretty dresses of the little girls who went by: they said proudly:

"Only in Paris can you see children so well dressed as that."

Christophe made fun of the famous upheaval that had been predicted. . . . Such nice people! . . . He was quite fond of them, although a little contemptuous.

As they got farther along the crowd thickened. Men with pale hangdog faces and horrible mouths slipped into the stream of people, all on the alert, waiting for the time to pounce on their prey. The mud was stirred up. With every inch the river grew more and more turbid. Now it flowed slowly thick, opaque, and heavy. Like air-bubbles rising from the depths to

the greasy surface, there came up calling voices, shrill whistles, the cries of the newsboys, piercing the dull roar of the multitude, and made it possible to take the measure of its strata. At the end of a street, near Amélie's restaurant, there was a noise like that of a mill-race. The crowd was stemmed up against several ranks of police and soldiers. In front of the obstacles a serried mass was formed, howling, whistling, singing, laughing, and eddying this way and that. . . . The laughter of the people is the only means they have of expressing a thousand obscure and yet deep feelings which cannot find an outlet in words! . . .

The multitude was not hostile. The people did not know what they wanted. Until they did know they were content to amuse themselves—after their own nervous, brutal fashion, still without malice—to amuse themselves with pushing and being pushed, insulting the police and each other. But little by little, they lost their ardor. Those who came up from behind got tired of being able to see nothing, and were the more provocative inasmuch as they ran little risk behind the shelter of the human barricade in front of them. Those in front, being crushed between those who were pushing and those who were offering resistance, grew more and more exasperated as their position became more and more intolerable: the force of the current pushing them on increased their own force an hundredfold. And all of them, as they were squeezed closer and closer together, like cattle, felt the warmth of the whole herd creeping through their breasts and their loins: and it seemed to them then that they formed a solid block: and each was all, each was a giant with the arms of Briareus. Every now and then a wave of blood would surge to the heart of the thousand-headed monster: eyes would dart hatred, murderous cries would go up. Men cowering away in the third and fourth row began to throw stones. Whole families were looking down from the windows of the houses: it was like being at the play: they excited the mob and waited with a little thrill of agonized impatience for the troops to charge.

Christophe forced his way through the dense throng with elbows and knees, like a wedge. Olivier followed him. The living mass parted for a moment to let them pass and closed again at once behind them. Christophe was in fine fettle. He had

entirely forgotten that only five minutes ago he had denied the possibility of an upheaval of the people. Hardly had he set foot inside the stream than he was swept along: though he was a foreigner in this crowd of Frenchmen and a stranger to their demands, yet he was suddenly engulfed by them: little he cared what they wanted: he wanted it too: little he cared whither they were going: he was going too, drinking in the breath of their madness.

Olivier was dragged along after him, but it was no joy to him; he saw clearly, he never lost his self-consciousness, and was a thousand times more a stranger to the passions of these people who were his people than Christophe, and yet he was carried away by them like a piece of wreckage. His illness, which had weakened him, had also relaxed everything that bound him to life. How far removed he felt from these people! . . . Being free from the delirium that was in them and having all his wits at liberty, his mind took in the minutest details. It gave him pleasure to gaze at the bust of a girl standing in front of him and at her pretty, white neck. And at the same time he was disgusted by the sickly, thick smell that was given off from the close-packed heap of bodies.

"Christophe!" he begged.

Christophe did not hear him.

"Christophe!"

"Eh?"

"Let's go home."

"You're afraid?" said Christophe.

He pushed on. Olivier followed him with a sad smile.

A few rows in front of them, in the danger zone where the people were so huddled together as to form a solid barricade, he saw his friend the little hunchback perched on the roof of a newspaper kiosk. He was clinging with both hands, and crouching in a most uncomfortable position, and laughing as he looked over the wall of soldiers: and then he would turn again and look back at the crowd with an air of triumph. He saw Olivier and beamed at him: then once more he began to peer across the soldiers, over the square, with his eyes wide staring in hope and expectation . . . of what?—Of the thing which was to come to pass. . . . He was not alone. There were many, many others

all around him waiting for the miracle! And Olivier, looking at Christophe, saw that he too was expecting it.

He called to the boy and shouted to him to come down. Emmanuel pretended not to hear and looked away. He had seen Christophe. He was glad to be in a position of peril in the turmoil, partly to show his courage to Olivier, partly to punish him for being with Christophe.

Meanwhile they had come across some of their friends in the crowd,—Coquard, with his golden beard, who expected nothing more than a little jostling and crushing, and with the eye of an expert was watching for the moment when the vessel would overflow. Farther on they met the fair Berthe, who was slanging the people about her and getting roughly mauled. She had succeeded in wriggling through to the front row, and she was hurling insults at the police. Coquard came up to Christophe. When Christophe saw him he began to chaff him:

"What did I tell you? Nothing is going to happen."

"That remains to be seen!" said Coquard. "Don't you be too sure. It won't be long before the fun begins."

"Rot!" said Christophe.

At that very moment the cuirassiers, getting tired of having stones flung at them, marched forward to clear the entrances to the square: the central body came forward at a double. Immediately the stampede began. As the Gospel has it, the first were last. But they took good care not to be last for long. By way of covering their confusion the runaways yelled at the soldiers following them and screamed: "Assassins!" long before a single blow had been struck. Berthe wriggled through the crowd like an eel, shrieking at the top of her voice. She rejoined her friends; and taking shelter behind Coquard's broad back, she recovered her breath, pressed close up against Christophe, gripped his arm, in fear or for some other reason, ogled Olivier, and shook her fist at the enemy, and screeched. Coquard took Christophe's arm and said:

"Let's go to Amélie's."

They had very little way to go. Berthe had preceded them with Graillot and a few workmen. Christophe was on the point of entering followed by Olivier. The street had a shelving ridge. The pavement, by the creamery, was five or six steps higher than

the roadway. Olivier stopped to take a long breath after his escape from the crowd. He disliked the idea of being in the poisoned air of the restaurant and the clamorous voices of these fanatics. He said to Christophe:

"I'm going home."

"Very well, then, old fellow," said Christophe. "I'll rejoin you in an hour from now."

"Don't run any risks, Christophe!"

"Coward!" said Christophe, laughing.

He turned into the creamery.

Olivier walked along to the corner of the shop. A few steps more and he would be in a little by-street which would take him out of the uproar. The thought of his little protégé crossed his mind. He turned to look for him. He saw him at the very moment when Emmanuel had slipped down from his coign of vantage and was rolling on the ground being trampled underfoot by the rabble: the fugitives were running over his body: the police were just reaching the spot. Olivier did not stop to think: he rushed down the steps and ran to his aid. A navvy saw the danger, the soldiers with drawn sabers. Olivier holding out his hand to the boy to help him up, the savage rush of the police knocked them both over. He shouted out, and in his turn rushed in. Some of his comrades followed at a run. Others rushed down from the threshold of the restaurant, and, on their cries, came those who had already entered. The two bodies of men hurled themselves at each other's throats like dogs. And the women, standing at the top of the steps, screamed and yelled.— So Olivier, the aristocrat, the essentially middle-class nature, released the spring of the battle, which no man desired less than he.

Christophe was swept along by the workmen and plunged into the fray without knowing who had been the cause of it. Nothing was farther from his thoughts than that Olivier had taken part in it. He thought him far away in safety. It was impossible to see anything of the fight. Every man had enough to do in keeping an eye on his opponent. Olivier had disappeared in the whirlpool like a foundered ship. He had received a jab from a bayonet, meant for some one else, in his left breast: he fell: the crowd trampled him underfoot. Christophe had been swept away by an eddy to the farthest extremity of the field of

battle. He did not fight with any animosity: he jostled and was jostled with a fierce zest as though he was in the throng at a village fair. So little did he think of the serious nature of the affair that when he was gripped by a huge, broad-shouldered policeman and closed with him, he saw the thing in grotesque and said:

"My waltz, I think."

But when another policeman pounced on to his back, he shook himself like a wild boar, and hammered away with his fists at the two of them: he had no intention of being taken prisoner. One of his adversaries, the man who had seized him from behind, rolled down on the ground. The other lost his head and drew his sword. Christophe saw the point of the saber come within a hand's breadth of his chest: he dodged, and twisted the man's wrist and tried to wrench his weapon from him. He could not understand it: till then it had seemed to him just a game. They went on struggling and battering at each other's faces. He had no time to stop to think. He saw murder in the other man's eyes: and murderous desire awoke in him. He saw that the man would slit him up like a sheep. With a sudden movement he turned the man's hand and sword against himself: he plunged the sword into his breast, felt that he was killing him, and killed him. And suddenly the whole thing was changed: he was mad, intoxicated, and he roared aloud.

His yells produced an indescribable effect. The crowd had smelt blood. In a moment it became a savage pack. On all sides swords were drawn. The red flag appeared in the windows of the houses. And old memories of Parisian revolutions prompted them to build a barricade. The stones were torn up from the street, the gas lamps were wrenched away, trees were pulled up, an omnibus was overturned. A trench that had been left open for months in connection with work on the *Métropolitain* was turned to account. The cast-iron railings round the trees were broken up and used as missiles. Weapons were brought out of pockets and from the houses. In less than an hour the scuffle had grown into an insurrection: the whole district was in a state of siege. And, on the barricade, was Christophe, unrecognizable, shouting his revolutionary song, which was taken up by a score of voices.

Olivier had been carried to Amélie's. He was unconscious. He had been laid on a bed in the dark back-shop. At the foot of the bed stood the hunchback, numbed and distraught. At first Berthe had been overcomé with emotion: at a distance she had thought it was Graillot who had been wounded, and, when she recognized Olivier, her first exclamation had been:

"What a good thing! I thought it was Léopold."

But now she was full of pity. And she kissed Olivier and held his head on the pillow. With her usual calmness Amélie had undone his clothes and dressed his wound. Manousse Heimann was there, fortunately, with his inseparable Canet. Like Christophe they had come out of curiosity to see the demonstration: they had been present at the affray and seen Olivier fall. Canet was blubbering like a child: and at the same time he was thinking:

"What on earth am I doing here?"

Manousse examined Olivier: at once he saw that it was all over. He had a great feeling for Olivier: but he was not a man to worry about what can't be helped: and he turned his thoughts to Christophe. He admired Christophe though he regarded him as a pathological case. He knew his ideas about the Revolution: and he wanted to deliver him from the idiotic danger he was running in a cause that was not his own. The risk of a broken head in the scuffle was not the only one: if Christophe were taken, everything pointed to his being used as an example and getting more than he bargained for. Manousse had long ago been warned that the police had their eye on Christophe: they would saddle him not only with his own follies but with those of others. Xavier Bernard, whom Manousse had just encountered, prowling through the crowd, for his own amusement as well as in pursuit of duty, had nodded to him as he passed and said:

"That Krafft of yours is an idiot. Would you believe that he's putting himself up as a mark on the barricade! We shan't miss him this time. You'd better get him out of harm's way."

That was easier said than done. If Christophe were to find out that Olivier was dying he would become a raging madman,

he would go out to kill, he would be killed. Manousse said to Bernard:

"If he doesn't go at once, he's done for. I'll try and take him away."

"How?"

"In Canet's motor. It's over there at the corner of the street."

"Please, please . . ." gulped Canet.

"You must take him to Laroche," Manousse went on. "You will get there in time to catch the Pontarlier express. You must pack him off to Switzerland."

"He won't go."

"He will. I'll tell him that Jeannin will follow him, or has already gone."

Without paying any attention to Canet's objections Manousse set out to find Christophe on the barricade. He was not very courageous, he started every time he heard a shot: and he counted the cobble-stones over which he stepped—(odd or even), to make out his chances of being killed. He did not stop, but went through with it. When he reached the barricade he found Christophe, perched on a wheel of the overturned omnibus, amusing himself by firing pistol-shots into the air. Round the barricade the riff-raff of Paris, spewed up from the gutters, had swollen up like the dirty water from a sewer after heavy rain. The original combatants were drowned by it. Manousse shouted to Christophe, whose back was turned to him. Christophe did not hear him. Manousse climbed up to him and plucked at his sleeve. Christophe pushed him away and almost knocked him down. Manousse stuck to it, climbed up again, and shouted:

"Jeannin . . ."

In the uproar the rest of the sentence was lost. Christophe stopped short, dropped his revolver, and, slipping down from his scaffolding, he rejoined Manousse, who started pulling him away.

"You must clear out," said Manousse.

"Where is Olivier?"

"You must clear out," repeated Manousse.

"Why?" said Christophe.

"The barricade will be captured in an hour. You will be arrested to-night."

"What have I done?"

"Look at your hands. . . . Come! . . . There's no room for doubt, they won't spare you. Everybody recognized you. You've not got a moment to lose."

"Where is Olivier?"

"At home."

"I'll go and join him."

"You can't do that. The police are waiting for you at the door. He sent me to warn you. You must cut and run."

"Where do you want me to go?"

"To Switzerland. Canet will take you out of this in his car."

"And Olivier?"

"There's no time to talk. . . ."

"I won't go without seeing him."

"You'll see him there. He'll join you to-morrow. He'll go by the first train. Quick! I'll explain."

He caught hold of Christophe. Christophe was dazed by the noise and the wave of madness that had rushed through him, could not understand what he had done and what he was being asked to do, and let himself be dragged away. Manousse took his arm, and with his other hand caught hold of Canet, who was not at all pleased with the part allotted to him in the affair: and he packed the two of them into the car. The worthy Canet would have been bitterly sorry if Christophe had been caught, but he would have much preferred some one else to help him to escape. Manousse knew his man. And as he had some qualms about Canet's cowardice, he changed his mind just as he was leaving them and the car was getting into its stride and climbed up and sat with them.

Olivier did not recover consciousness. Amélie and the little hunchback were left alone in the room. Such a sad room it was, airless and gloomy! It was almost dark. . . . For one instant Olivier emerged from the abyss. He felt Emmanuel's tears and kisses on his hand. He smiled faintly, and painfully laid his hand on the boy's head. Such a heavy hand it was! . . . Then he sank back once more. . . .

By the dying man's head, on the pillow, Amélie had laid a First of May nosegay, a few sprays of lily-of-the-valley. A leaky tap in the courtyard dripped, dripped into a bucket. For a second mental images hovered tremblingly at the back of his mind, like a light flickering and dying down . . . a house in the country with glycine on the walls: a garden where a child was playing: a boy lying on the turf: a little fountain plashing in its stone basin: a little girl laughing. . . .

II

They drove out of Paris. They crossed the vast plains of France shrouded in mist. It was an evening like that on which Christophe had arrived in Paris ten years before. He was a fugitive then, as now. But then his friend, the man who loved him, was alive: and Christophe was fleeing towards him. . . .

During the first hour Christophe was still under the excitement of the fight: he talked volubly in a loud voice: in a breathless, jerky fashion he kept on telling what he had seen and heard: he was proud of his achievement and felt no remorse. Manousse and Canet talked too, by way of making him forget. Gradually his feverish excitement subsided, and Christophe stopped talking: his two companions went on making conversation alone. He was a little bewildered by the afternoon's adventures, but in no way abashed. He recollected the time when he had come to France, a fugitive then, always a fugitive. It made him laugh. No doubt he was fated to be so. It gave him no pain to be leaving Paris: the world is wide: men are the same everywhere. It mattered little to him where he might be so long as he was with his friend. He was counting on seeing him again next day. They had promised him that.

They reached Laroche. Manousse and Canet did not leave him until they had seen him into the train. Christophe made them say over the name of the place where he was to get out, and the name of the hotel, and the post-office where he would find his letters. In spite of themselves, as they left him, they both looked utterly dejected. Christophe wrung their hands gaily.

"Come!" he shouted, "don't look so like a funeral. Good Lord, we shall meet again! Nothing easier! We'll write to each other to-morrow."

The train started. They watched it disappear.

"Poor devil!" said Manousse.

They got back into the car. They were silent. After a short time Canet said to Manousse:

"Bah! the dead are dead. We must help the living."

As night fell Christophe's excitement subsided altogether. He sat huddled in a corner of the carriage, and pondered. He was sobered and icy cold. He looked down at his hands and saw blood on them that was not his own. He gave a shiver of disgust. The scene of the murder came before him once more. He remembered that he had killed a man: and now he knew not why. He began to go over the whole battle from the very beginning; but now he saw it in a very different light. He could not understand how he had got mixed up in it. He went back over every incident of the day from the moment when he had left the house with Olivier: he saw the two of them walking through Paris until the moment when he had been caught up by the whirlwind. There he lost the thread: the chain of his thoughts was snapped: how could he have shouted and struck out and moved with those men with whose beliefs he disagreed? It was not he, it was not he! . . . It was a total eclipse of his will! . . . He was dazed by it and ashamed. He was not his own master then? Who was his master? . . . He was being carried by the express through the night: and the inward night through which he was being carried was no less dark, nor was the unknown force less swift and dizzy. . . . He tried hard to shake off his unease: but one anxiety was followed by another. The nearer he came to his destination, the more he thought of Olivier; and he was oppressed by an unreasoning fear.

As he arrived he looked through the window across the platform for the familiar face of his friend. . . . There was no one. He got out and still went on looking about him. Once or twice he thought he saw . . . No, it was not "he." He went to the appointed hotel. Olivier was not there. There was no reason for Christophe to be surprised: how could Olivier

have preceded him? . . . But from that moment on he was in an agony of suspense.

It was morning. Christophe went up to his room. Then he came down again, had breakfast, sauntered through the streets. He pretended to be free of anxiety and looked at the lake and the shop-windows, chaffed the girl in the restaurant, and turned over the illustrated papers. . . . Nothing interested him. The day dragged through, slowly and heavily. About seven o'clock in the evening, Christophe having, for want of anything else to do, dined early and eaten nothing, went up to his room, and asked that as soon as the friend he was expecting arrived, he should be brought up to him. He sat down at the desk with his back turned to the door. He had nothing to busy himself with, no baggage, no books: only a paper that he had just bought: he forced himself to read it: but his mind was wandering: he was listening for footsteps in the corridor. All his nerves were on edge with the exhaustion of a day's anxious waiting and a sleepless night.

Suddenly he heard some one open the door. Some indefinable feeling made him not turn around at once. He felt a hand on his shoulder. Then he turned and saw Olivier smiling at him. He was not surprised, and said:

"Ah, here you are at last!"

The illusion vanished.

Christophe got up suddenly, knocking over chair and table. His hair stood on end. He stood still for a moment, livid, with his teeth chattering.

At the end of that moment—(in vain did he shut his eyes to it and tell himself: "I know nothing")—he knew everything: he was sure of what he was going to hear.

He could not stay in his room. He went down into the street and walked about for an hour. When he returned the porter met him in the hall of the hotel and gave him a letter. *The* letter. He was quite sure it would be there. His hand trembled as he took it. He opened it, saw that Olivier was dead, and fainted.

The letter was from Manousse. It said that in concealing the disaster from him the day before, and hurrying him off, they had only been obeying Olivier's wishes, who had desired to

insure his friend's escape,—that it was useless for Christophe to stay, as it would mean the end of him also,—that it was his duty to seek safety for the sake of his friend's memory, and for his other friends, and for the sake of his own fame, etc., etc. . . . Amélie had added three lines in her big, scrawling handwriting, to say that she would take every care of the poor little gentleman. . . .

When Christophe came back to himself he was furiously angry. He wanted to kill Manousse. He ran to the station. The hall of the hotel was empty, the streets were deserted: in the darkness the few belated passers-by did not notice his wildly staring eyes or his furious breathing. His mind had fastened as firmly as a bulldog with its fangs on to the one fixed idea: "Kill Manousse! Kill! . . ." He wanted to return to Paris. The night express had gone an hour before. He had to wait until the next morning. He could not wait. He took the first train that went in the direction of Paris, a train which stopped at every station. When he was left alone in the carriage Christophe cried over and over again:

"It is not true! It is not true!"

At the second station across the French frontier the train stopped altogether: it did not go any farther. Shaking with fury, Christophe got out and asked for another train, battering the sleepy officials with questions, and only knocking up against indifference. Whatever he did he would arrive too late. Too late for Olivier. He could not even manage to catch Manousse. He would be arrested first. What was he to do? Which way to turn? To go on? To go back? What was the use? What was the use? . . . He thought of giving himself up to a gendarme who went past him. He was held back by an obscure instinct for life which bade him return to Switzerland. There was no train in either direction for a few hours. Christophe sat down in the waiting-room, could not keep still, left the station, and blindly followed the road on through the night. He found himself in the middle of a bare countryside—fields, broken here and there with clumps of pines, the vanguard of a forest. He plunged into it. He had hardly gone more than a few steps when he flung himself down on the ground and cried:

"Olivier!"

He lay across the path and sobbed.

A long time afterwards a train whistling in the distance roused him and made him get up. He tried to go back to the station, but took the wrong road. He walked on all through the night. What did it matter to him where he went? He went on walking to keep from thinking, walking, walking, until he could not think, walking on in the hope that he might fall dead. Ah! if only he might die! . . .

At dawn he found himself in a French village a long way from the frontier. All night he had been walking away from it. He went into an inn, ate a huge meal, set out once more, and walked on and on. During the day he sank down in the middle of a field and lay there asleep until the evening. When he woke up it was to face another night. His fury had abated. He was left only with frightful grief that choked him. He dragged himself to a farmhouse, and asked for a piece of bread and a truss of straw for a bed. The farmer stared hard at him, cut him a slice of bread, led him into the stable, and locked it. Christophe lay in the straw near the thickly-smelling cows, and devoured his bread. Tears were streaming down his face. Neither his hunger nor his sorrow could be appeased. During the night sleep once more delivered him from his agony for a few hours. He woke up next day on the sound of the door opening. He lay still and did not move. He did not want to come back to life. The farmer stopped and looked down at him for a long time: he was holding in his hand a paper, at which he glanced from time to time. At last he moved forward and thrust his newspaper in front of Christophe. His portrait was on the front page.

"It is I," said Christophe. "You'd better give me up."

"Get up," said the farmer.

Christophe got up. The man motioned to him to follow. They went behind the barn and walked along a winding path through an orchard. They came to a cross, and then the farmer pointed along a road and said to Christophe:

"The frontier is over there."

Christophe walked on mechanically. He did not know why he should go on. He was so tired, so broken in body and soul,

that he longed to stop with every stride. But he felt that if he were to stop he would never be able to go on again, never budge from the spot where he fell. He walked on right through the day. He had not a penny to buy bread. Besides, he avoided the villages. He had a queer feeling which entirely baffled his reason, that, though he wished to die, he was afraid of being taken prisoner: his body was like a hunted animal fleeing before its captors. His physical wretchedness, exhaustion, hunger, an obscure feeling of terror which was augmented by his worn-out condition, for the time being smothered his moral distress. His one thought was to find a refuge where he could in safety be alone with his distress and feed on it.

He crossed the frontier. In the distance he saw a town surmounted with towers and steeples and factory chimneys, from which the thick smoke streamed like black rivers, monotonously, all in the same direction across the gray sky under the rain. He was very near a collapse. Just then he remembered that he knew a German doctor, one Erich Braun, who lived in the town, and had written to him the year before, after one of his successes, to remind him of their old acquaintance. Dull though Braun might be, little though he might enter into his life, yet, like a wounded animal, Christophe made a supreme effort before he gave in to reach the house of some one who was not altogether a stranger.

Under the cloud of smoke and rain, he entered the gray and red city. He walked through it, seeing nothing, asking his way, losing himself, going back, wandering aimlessly. He was at the end of his tether. For the last time he screwed up his will that was so near to breaking-point to climb up the steep alleys, and the stairs which went to the top of a stiff little hill, closely overbuilt with houses round a gloomy church. There were sixty red stone steps in threes and sixes. Between each little flight of steps was a narrow platform for the door of a house. On each platform Christophe stopped swaying to take breath. Far over his head, above the church tower, crows were whirling.

At last he came upon the name he was looking for. He knocked.—The alley was in darkness. In utter weariness he closed his eyes. All was dark within him. . . . Ages passed.

The narrow door was opened. A woman appeared on the threshold. Her face was in darkness: but her outline was sharply shown against the background of a little garden which could be clearly seen at the end of a long passage, in the light of the setting sun. She was tall, and stood very erect, without a word, waiting for him to speak. He could not see her eyes: but he felt them taking him in. He asked for Doctor Erich Braun and gave his name. He had great difficulty in getting the words out. He was worn out with fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Without a word the woman went away, and Christophe followed her into a room with closed shutters. In the darkness he bumped into her: his knees and body brushed against her. She went out again and closed the door of the room and left him in the dark. He stayed quite still, for fear of knocking something over, leaning against the wall with his forehead against the soft hangings: his ears buzzed: the darkness seemed alive and throbbing to his eyes.

Overhead he heard a chair being moved, an exclamation of surprise, a door slammed. Then came heavy footsteps down the stairs.

"Where is he?" asked a voice that he knew.

The door of the room was opened once more.

"What! You left him in the dark! Anna! Good gracious! A light!"

Christophe was so weak, he was so utterly wretched, that the sound of the man's loud voice, cordial as it was, brought him comfort in his misery. He gripped the hand that was held out to him. The two men looked at each other. Braun was a little man: he had a red face with a black, scrubby and untidy beard, kind eyes twinkling behind spectacles, a broad, bumpy, wrinkled, worried, inexpressive brow, hair carefully plastered down and parted right down to his neck. He was very ugly: but Christophe was very glad to see him and to be shaking hands with him. Braun made no effort to conceal his surprise.

"Good Heavens! How changed he is! What a state he is in!"

"I'm just come from Paris," said Christophe. "I'm a fugitive."

"I know, I know. We saw the papers. They said you were caught. Thank God! You've been much in our thoughts, mine and Anna's."

He stopped and made Christophe known to the silent creature who had admitted him:

"My wife."

She had stayed in the doorway of the room with a lamp in her hand. She had a taciturn face with a firm chin. The light fell on her brown hair with its reddish shades of color, and on her pallid cheeks. She held out her hand to Christophe stiffly with the elbow close against her side: he took it without looking at her. He was almost done.

"I came . . ." he tried to explain. "I thought you would be so kind . . . if it isn't putting you out too much . . . as to put me up for a day——"

Braun did not let him finish.

"A day! . . . Twenty days, fifty, as long as you like. As long as you are in this country you shall stay in our house: and I hope you will stay for a long time. It is an honor and a great happiness for us."

Christophe was overwhelmed by his kind words. He flung himself into Braun's arms.

"My dear Christophe, my dear Christophe!" said Braun. . . . "He is weeping. . . . Well, well what is it? . . . Anna! Anna! . . . Quick, he has fainted. . . ."

Christophe had collapsed in his host's arms. He had succumbed to the fainting fit which had been imminent for several hours.

When he opened his eyes again he was lying in a great bed. A smell of wet earth came up through the open window. Braun was bending over him.

"Forgive me," murmured Christophe, trying to get up.

"He is dying of hunger!" cried Braun.

The woman went out and returned with a cup and gave him to drink. Braun held his head. Christophe was restored to life: but his exhaustion was stronger than his hunger: hardly was his head laid back on the pillow than he went to sleep. Braun and his wife watched over him: then, seeing that he only needed rest, they left him.

He fell into the sort of sleep that seems to last for years, a heavy crushing sleep, dropping like a piece of lead to the bottom of a lake. In such a sleep a man is a prey to his accumulated weariness and the monstrous hallucinations which are forever prowling at the gates of his will. He tried to wake up, burning, broken, lost in the impenetrable darkness: he heard the clocks striking the half hours: he could not breathe, or think, or move: he was bound and gagged like a man flung into water to drown: he tried to struggle, but only sank down again.—Dawn came at length, the tardy gray dawn of a rainy day. The intolerable heat that consumed him grew less: but his body was pinned under the weight of a mountain. He woke up. It was a terrible awakening.

"Why open my eyes? Why wake up? Rather stay, like my poor friend, who is lying under the earth. . . ."

He lay on his back and never moved, although he was cramped by his position in the bed: his legs and arms were heavy as stone. He was in a grave. A dim pale light. A few drops of rain dashed against the windows. A bird in the garden was uttering a little plaintive cry. Oh! the misery of life! The cruel futility of it all! . . .

The hours crept by. Braun came in. Christophe did not turn his head. Seeing his eyes open, Braun greeted him joyfully: and as Christophe went on grimly staring at the ceiling he tried to make him shake off his melancholy: he sat down on the bed and chattered noisily. Christophe could not bear the noise. He made an effort, superhuman it seemed to him, and said:

"Please leave me alone."

The good little man changed his tone at once.

"You want to be alone? Why, of course. Keep quiet. Rest, don't talk, we'll bring you up something to eat, and no one shall say a word."

But it was impossible for him to be brief. After endless explanations he tiptoed from the room with his huge slippers creaking on the floor. Christophe was left alone once more, and sank back into his mortal weariness. His thoughts were veiled by the mist of suffering. He wore himself out in trying to understand. . . . "Why had he known him? Why had

he loved him? What good had Antoinette's devotion been? What was the meaning of all the lives and generations,—so much experience and hope—ending in that life, dragged down with it into the void?" . . . Life was meaningless. Death was meaningless. A man was blotted out, shuffled out of existence, a whole family disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no trace. Impossible to tell whether it is more odious or more grotesque. He burst into a fit of angry laughter, laughter of hatred and despair. His impotence in the face of such sorrow, his sorrow in the face of such impotence, were dragging him down to death. His heart was broken. . . .

There was not a sound in the house, save the doctor's footsteps as he went out on his rounds. Christophe had lost all idea of the time, when Anna appeared. She brought him some dinner on a tray. He watched her without stirring, without even moving his lips to thank her: but in his staring eyes, which seemed to see nothing, the image of the young woman was graven with photographic clarity. Long afterwards, when he knew her better, it was always thus that he saw her: later impressions were never able to efface that first memory of her. She had thick hair done up in a heavy knob, a bulging forehead, wide cheeks, a short, straight nose, eyes perpetually cast down, and when they met the eyes of another, they would turn away with an expression in which there was little frankness and small kindness: her lips were a trifle thick, and closely pressed together, and she had a stubborn, rather hard expression. She was tall, apparently big and well made, but her clothes were very stiff and tight, and she was cramped in her movements. She came silently and noiselessly and laid the tray on the table by the bed and went out again with her arms close to her sides and her head down. Christophe felt no surprise at her strange and rather absurd appearance: he did not touch his food and relapsed into his silent suffering.

The day passed. Evening came and once more Anna with more food. She found the meal she had brought in the morning still untouched: and she took it away without a remark. She had none of those fond observations which all women seem instinctively to produce for the benefit of an invalid. It was as though Christophe did not exist for her, as though she

herself hardly existed. This time Christophe felt a sort of dumb hostility as impatiently he followed her awkward hasty movements. However, he was grateful to her for not trying to talk.—He was even more grateful to her when, after she had gone, he had to put up with the doctor's protestations, when he observed that Christophe had not touched the earlier meal. He was angry with his wife for not having forced Christophe to eat, and now tried to compel him to do so. For the sake of peace, Christophe had to gulp down a little milk. After that he turned his back on him.

The next night was more tranquil. Heavy sleep once more drew Christophe into its state of nothingness. Not a trace of hateful life was left.—But waking up was even more suffocating than before. He went on turning over and over all the details of the fateful day, Olivier's reluctance to leave the house, his urgent desire to go home, and he said to himself in despair:

"It was I who killed him. . . ."

He could not bear to stay there any longer, shut up in that room, lying motionless beneath the claws of the fierce-eyed sphinx that went on battering him with its dizzy rain of questions and its deathlike breath. He got up all in a fever: he dragged himself out of the room and went downstairs: in his instinctive fear he was driven to cling to other human creatures. And as soon as he heard another voice he felt a longing to rush away.

Braun was in the dining-room. He received Christophe with his usual demonstrations of friendship and at once began to ply him with questions as to what had happened in Paris. Christophe seized him by the arm:

"No," he said. "Don't ask me. Later on. . . . You mustn't mind. I can't, now. I'm dead tired, worn out. . . ."

"I know, I know," said Braun kindly. "Your nerves are shaken. The emotions of the last few days. Don't talk. Don't put yourself out in any way. You are free, you are at home here. No one will worry about you."

He kept his word. By way of sparing his guest he went to the opposite extreme: he dared not even talk to his wife in Christophe's presence: he talked in whispers and walked about on tiptoe: the house became still and silent. Exasperated by

the whispering and the silence and the affectation of it all, Christophe had to beg Braun to go on living just as he usually did.

For some days no one paid any attention to Christophe. He would sit for hours together in the corner of a room, or he would wander through the house like a man in a dream. What were his thoughts? He hardly knew. He hardly had even strength enough to suffer. He was crushed. The dryness of his heart was a horror to him. He had only one desire: to be buried with "him" and to make an end.—One day he found the garden-door open and went out. But it hurt him so much to be in the light of day that he returned hurriedly and shut himself up in his room with all the shutters closed. Fine days were torture to him. He hated the sun. The brutal serenity of Nature overwhelmed him. At meals he would eat in silence the food that Braun laid before him, and he would sit with never a word staring down at the table. One day Braun pointed to the piano in the drawing-room: Christophe turned from it in terror. Noise of any sort was detestable to him. Silence, silence, and the night! . . . There was nothing in him save an aching void, and a need of emptiness. Gone was his joy in life, gone the splendid bird of joy that once used to soar blithely, ecstatically upwards, pouring out song. There were days when, sitting in his room, he had no more feeling of life than the halting tic-tac of the clock in the next room, that seemed to be beating in his own brain. And yet, the wild bird of joy was still in him, it would suddenly take flight, and flutter against the bars of its cage: and in the depths of his soul there was a frightful tumult of sorrow—"the bitter cry of one living in the wilderness. . . ."

The world's misery lies in this, that a man hardly ever has a companion. Women perhaps, and chance friendships. We are reckless in our use of the lovely word, friend. In reality we hardly have a single friend all through our lives. Rare, very rare, are those men who have real friends. But the happiness of it is so great that it is impossible to live when they are gone. The friend filled the life of his friend, unbeknown to him, unmarked. The friend goes: and life is empty. Not only the beloved is lost, but every reason for loving, every reason for

having loved. Why had he lived? Why had either lived?

The blow of Olivier's death was the more terrible to Christophe in that it fell just at a time when his whole nature was in a state of upheaval. There are in life certain ages when there takes place a silently working organic change in a man: then body and soul are more susceptible to attack from without; the mind is weakened, its power is sapped by a vague sadness, a feeling of satiety, a sort of detachment from what it is doing, an incapacity for seeing any other course of action. At such periods of their lives when these crises occur, the majority of men are bound by domestic ties, forming a safeguard for them, which, it is true, deprives them of the freedom of mind necessary for self-judgment, for discovering where they stand, and for beginning to build up a healthy new life. For them so many sorrows, so much bitterness and disgust remain concealed! . . . Onward! Onward! A man must ever be pressing on. . . . The common round, anxiety and care for the family for which he is responsible, keep a man like a jaded horse, sleeping between the shafts, and trotting on and on.—But a free man has nothing to support him in his hours of negation, nothing to force him to go on. He goes on as a matter of habit: he knows not whither he is going. His powers are scattered, his consciousness is obscured. It is an awful thing for him if, just at the moment when he is most asleep, there comes a thunderclap to break in upon his somnambulism! Then he comes very nigh to destruction.

A few letters from Paris, which at last reached him, plucked Christophe for a moment out of his despairing apathy. They were from Cécile and Madame Arnaud. They brought him messages of comfort. Cold comfort. Futile condolence. Those who talk about suffering know it not. The letters only brought him an echo of the voice that was gone. . . . He had not the heart to reply: and the letters ceased. In his despondency he tried to blot out his tracks. To disappear. . . . Suffering is unjust: all those who had loved him dropped out of his existence. Only one creature still existed: the man who was dead. For many weeks he strove to bring him to life again: he used to talk to him, write to him:

"My dear, I had no letter from you to-day. Where are you? Come back, come back, speak to me, write to me! . . ."

But at night, hard though he tried, he could never succeed in seeing him in his dreams. We rarely dream of those we have lost, while their loss is still a pain. They come back to us later on when we are beginning to forget.

However, the outside world began gradually to penetrate to the sepulcher of Christophe's soul. At first he became dimly conscious of the different noises in the house and to take an unwitting interest in them. He marked the time of day when the front door opened and shut, and how often during the day, and the different ways in which it was opened for the various visitors. He knew Braun's step: he used to visualize the doctor coming back from his rounds, stopping in the hall, hanging up his hat and cloak, always with the same meticulous fussy way. And when the accustomed noises came up to him out of the order in which he had come to look for them, he could not help trying to discover the reason for the change. At meals he began mechanically to listen to the conversation. He saw that Braun almost always talked single-handed. His wife used only to give him a curt reply. Braun was never put out by the want of anybody to talk to: he used to chat pleasantly and verbosely about the houses he had visited and the gossip he had picked up. At last, one day, Christophe looked at Braun while he was speaking: Braun was delighted, and laid himself out to keep him interested.

Christophe tried to pick up the threads of life again. . . . It was utterly exhausting! He felt old, as old as the world! . . . In the morning when he got up and saw himself in the mirror he was disgusted with his body, his gestures, his idiotic figure. Get up, dress, to what end? . . . He tried desperately to work: it made him sick. What was the good of creation, when everything ends in nothing? Music had become impossible for him. Art—(and everything else)—can only be rightly judged in unhappiness. Unhappiness is the touchstone. Only then do we know those who can stride across the ages, those who are stronger than death. Very few bear the test. In unhappiness we are struck by the mediocrity of certain souls upon whom we had counted—(and of the artists we had loved, who had been

like friends to our lives).—Who survives? How hollow does the beauty of the world ring under the touch of sorrow!

But sorrow grows weary, the force goes from its grip. Christophe's nerves were relaxed. He slept, slept unceasingly. It seemed that he would never succeed in satisfying his hunger for sleep.

At last one night he slept so profoundly that he did not wake up until well on into the afternoon of the next day. The house was empty. Braun and his wife had gone out. The window was open, and the smiling air was quivering with light. Christophe felt that a crushing weight had been lifted from him. He got up and went down into the garden. It was a narrow rectangle, inclosed within high walls, like those of a convent. There were gravel paths between grass-plots and humble flowers; and an arbor of grape-vines and climbing roses. A tiny fountain trickled from a grotto built of stones: an acacia against the wall hung its sweet-scented branches over the next garden. Above stood the old tower of the church, of red sandstone. It was four o'clock in the evening. The garden was already in shadow. The sun was still shining on the top of the tree and the red belfry. Christophe sat in the arbor, with his back to the wall, and his head thrown back, looking at the limpid sky through the interlacing tendrils of the vine and the roses. It was like waking from a nightmare. Everywhere was stillness and silence. Above his head nodded a cluster of roses languorously. Suddenly the most lovely rose of all shed its petals and died: the snow of the rose-leaves was scattered on the air. It was like the passing of a lovely innocent life. So simply! . . . In Christophe's mind it took on a significance of a rending sweetness. He choked: he hid his face in his hands, and sobbed. . . .

The bells in the church tower rang out. From one church to another called answering voices. . . . Christophe lost all consciousness of the passage of time. When he raised his head, the bells were silent and the sun had disappeared. Christophe was comforted by his tears: they had washed away the stains from his mind. Within himself he heard a little stream of music well forth and he saw the little crescent moon glide into the evening sky. He was called to himself by the sound of

footsteps entering the house. He went up to his room, locked the door, and let the fountain of music gush forth. Braun summoned him to dinner, knocked at the door, and tried to open it: Christophe made no reply. Anxiously Braun looked through the keyhole and was reassured when he saw Christophe lying half over the table surrounded with paper which he was blackening with ink.

A few hours later, worn out, Christophe went downstairs and found the doctor reading, impatiently waiting for him in the drawing-room. He embraced the little man, asked him to forgive him for his strange conduct since his arrival, and, without waiting to be asked, he began to tell Braun about the dramatic events of the past weeks. It was the only time he ever talked to him about it: he was never sure that Braun had understood him, for he talked disconnectedly, and it was very late, and, in spite of his eager interest, Braun was nearly dead with sleep. At last—(the clock struck two)—Christophe saw it and they said good-night.

From that time on Christophe's existence was reconstituted. He did not maintain his condition of transitory excitement: he came back to his sorrow, but it was normal sorrow which did not interfere with his life. He could not help returning to life! Though he had just lost his dearest friend in the world, though his grief had undermined him and Death had been his most intimate companion, there was in him such an abundant, such a tyrannical force of life, that it burst forth even in his elegies, shining forth from his eyes, his lips, his gestures. But a gnawing canker had crept into the heart of his force. Christophe had fits of despair, transports rather. He would be quite calm, trying to read, or walking: suddenly he would see Olivier's smile, his tired, gentle face. . . . It would tug at his heart. . . . He would falter, lay his hand on his breast, and moan. One day he was at the piano playing a passage from Beethoven with his old zest. . . . Suddenly he stopped, flung himself on the ground, buried his face in the cushions of a chair, and cried:

"My boy. . . ."

Worst of all was the sensation of having "already lived"

that was constantly with him. He was continually coming across familiar gestures, familiar words, the perpetual recurrence of the same experiences. He knew everything, had foreseen everything. One face would remind him of a face he had known and the lips would say—(as he was quite sure they would)—exactly the same things as he had heard from the original: beings similar to each other would pass through similar phases, knock up against the same obstacles, suffer from them in exactly the same way. If it is true that "nothing so much brings weariness of life as the new beginning of love," how much more then the new beginning of everything! It was elusive and delusive.—Christophe tried not to think of it, since it was necessary to do so, if he were to live, and since he wished to live. It is the saddest hypocrisy, such rejection of self-knowledge, in shame or piety, it is the invincible imperative need of living hiding away from itself! Knowing that no consolation is possible, a man invents consolations. Being convinced that life has no reason, he forges reasons for living. He persuades himself that he must live, even when no one outside himself is concerned. If need be he will go so far as to pretend that the dead man encourages him to live. And he knows that he is putting into the dead man's mouth the words that he wishes him to say. O misery! . . .

Christophe set out on the road once more: his step seemed to have regained its old assurance: the gates of his heart were closed upon his sorrow: he never spoke of it to others: he avoided being left alone with it himself: outwardly he seemed calm.

"*Real sorrows,*" says Balzac, "*are apparently at peace in the deep bed that they have made for themselves, where they seem to sleep, though all the while they never cease to fret and eat away the soul.*"

Any one knowing Christophe and watching him closely, seeing him coming and going, talking, composing, even laughing—(he could laugh now!)—would have felt that for all his vigor and the radiance of life in his eyes, something had been destroyed in him, in the inmost depths of his life.

As soon as he had regained his hold on life he had to

look about him for a means of living. There could be no question of his leaving the town. Switzerland was the safest shelter for him: and where else could he have found more devoted hospitality?—But his pride could not suffer the idea of his being any further a burden upon his friend. In spite of Braun's protestations, and his refusal to accept any payment, he could not rest until he had found enough pupils to permit of his paying his hosts for his board and lodging. It was not an easy matter. The story of his revolutionary escapade had been widely circulated: and the worthy families of the place were reluctant to admit a man who was regarded as dangerous, or at any rate extraordinary, and, in consequence, not quite "respectable," to their midst. However, his fame as a musician and Braun's good offices gained him access to four or five of the less timorous or more curious families, who were perhaps artistically snobbish enough to desire to gain particularity. They were none the less careful to keep an eye on him, and to maintain a respectable distance between master and pupils.

The Braun household fell into a methodically ordered existence. In the morning each member of it went about his business: the doctor on his rounds, Christophe to his pupils, Madame Braun to the market and about her charitable works. Christophe used to return about one, a little before Braun, who would not allow them to wait for him; and he used to sit down to dinner alone with the wife. He did not like that at all: for she was not sympathetic to him, and he could never find anything to say to her. She took no trouble to remove his impression, though it was impossible for her not to be aware of it; she never bothered to put herself out in dress or in mind to please him: she never spoke to Christophe first: her notable lack of charm in movement and dress, her awkwardness, her coldness, would have repelled any man who was as sensitive as Christophe to the charm of women. When he remembered the sparkling elegance of the Parisian women, he could not help thinking, as he looked at Anna:

"How ugly she is!"

Yet that was unjust: and he was not slow to notice the beauty of her hair, her hands, her mouth, her eyes,—on the rare occasions when he chanced to meet her gaze, which she always

averted at once. But his opinion was never modified. As a matter of politeness he forced himself to speak to her: he labored to find subjects of conversation: she never gave him the smallest assistance. Several times he tried to ask her about the town, her husband, herself: he could get nothing out of her. She would make the most trivial answers: she would make an effort to smile: but the effort was painfully evident; her smile was forced, her voice was hollow: she drawled and dragged every word: her every sentence was followed by a painful silence. At last Christophe only spoke to her as little as possible; and she was grateful to him for it. It was a great relief to both of them when the doctor came in. He was always in a good humor, talkative, busy, vulgar, worthy. He ate, drank, talked, laughed, plentifully. Anna used to talk to him a little: but they hardly ever touched on anything but the food in front of them or the price of things. Sometimes Braun would jokingly tease her about her pious works and the minister's sermons. Then she would stiffen herself, and relapse into an offended silence until the end of the meal. More often the doctor would talk about his patients: he would delight in describing repulsive cases, with a pleasant elaboration of detail which used to exasperate Christophe. Then he would throw his napkin on the table and get up, making faces of disgust which simply delighted the teller. Braun would stop at once, and soothe his friend and laugh. At the next meal he would begin again. His hospital pleasantries seemed to have the power to enliven the impassive Anna. She would break her silence with a sudden nervous laugh, which was something animal in quality. Perhaps she felt no less disgust than Christophe at the things that made her laugh.

In the afternoon Christophe had very few pupils. Then, as a rule, he would stay at home with Anna, while the doctor went out. They never saw each other. They used to go about their separate business. At first Braun had begged Christophe to give his wife a few lessons on the piano: she was, he said, an excellent musician. Christophe asked Anna to play him something. She did not need to be pressed, although she disliked doing it: but she did it with her usual ungraciousness: she played mechanically, with an incredible lack of sensibility:

each note was like another: there was no sort of rhythm or expression: when she had to turn the page she stopped short in the middle of a bar, made no haste about it, and went on with the next note. Christophe was so exasperated by it that he was hard put to it to keep himself from making an insulting remark: he could not help going out of the room before she had finished. She was not put out, but went on imperturbably to the very last note, and seemed to be neither hurt nor indignant at his rudeness: she hardly seemed to have noticed it. But the matter of music was never again mentioned between them. Sometimes in the afternoons when Christophe was out and returned unexpectedly, he would find Anna practising the piano, with icy, dull tenacity, going over and over one passage fifty times, and never by any chance showing the least animation. She never played when she knew that Christophe was at home. She devoted all the time that was not consecrated to her religious duties to her household work. She used to sew, and mend, and darn, and look after the servant: she had a mania for tidiness and cleanliness. Her husband thought her a fine woman, a little odd—"like all women," he used to say—but "like all women," devoted. On that last point Christophe made certain reservations *in petto:* such psychology seemed to him too simple; but he told himself that, after all, it was Braun's affair; and he gave no further thought to the matter.

They used to sit together after dinner in the evening. Braun and Christophe would talk. Anna would sit working. On Braun's entreaty, Christophe had consented to play the piano sometimes: and he would occasionally play on to a very late hour in the big gloomy room looking out on to the garden. Braun would go into ecstasies. . . . Who is there that does not know the type that has a passionate love for things they do not understand, or understand all wrong!—(which is why they love them!)—Christophe did not mind: he had met so many idiots in the course of his life! But when Braun gave vent to certain mawkish expressions of enthusiasm, he would stop playing, and go up to his room without a word. Braun grasped the truth at last, and put a stopper on his reflections. Besides, his love for music was quickly sated: he could never listen with any attention for more than a quarter of an hour

on end: he would pick up his paper, or doze off, and leave Christophe in peace. Anna would sit back in her chair and say nothing: she would have her work in her lap and seem to be working: but her eyes were always staring and her hands never moved. Sometimes she would go out without a sound in the middle of a piece, and be seen no more.

So the days passed. Christophe regained his strength. Braun's heavy but kindly attentions, the tranquillity of the household, the restful regularity of such a domestic life, the extremely nourishing German food, restored him to his old robustness. His physical health was repaired: but his moral machinery was still out of gear. His new vigor only served to accentuate the disorder of his mind, which could not recover its balance, like a badly ballasted ship which will turn turtle on the smallest shock.

He was profoundly lonely. He could have no intellectual intimacy with Braun. His relations with Anna were reduced, with a few exceptions, to saying good-morning and good-night. His dealings with his pupils were rather hostile than otherwise: for he hardly hid from them his opinion that the best thing for them to do was to give up music altogether. He knew nobody. It was not only his fault, though he had hidden himself away since his loss. People held aloof from him.

He was living in an old town, full of intelligence and vitality, but also full of patrician pride, self-contained, and self-satisfied. There was a bourgeois aristocracy with a taste for work and the higher culture, but narrow and pietistic, who were calmly convinced of their own superiority and the superiority of their city, and quite content to live in family isolation. There were enormous families with vast ramifications. Each family had its day for a general gathering of the clan. They were hardly at all open to the outside world. All these great houses, with fortunes generations old, felt no need of showing their wealth. They knew each other, and that was enough: the opinion of others was a thing of no consequence. There were millionaires dressed like humble shopkeepers, talking their raucous dialect with its pungent expressions, going conscientiously to their offices, every day of their lives, even at an age when the most

industrious of men will grant themselves the right to rest. Their wives prided themselves on their domestic skill. No dowry was given to the daughters. Rich men let their sons in their turn go through the same hard apprenticeship that they themselves had served. They practised strict economy in their daily lives. But they made a noble use of their fortune in collecting works of art, picture galleries, and in social work: they were forever giving enormous sums, nearly always anonymously, to found charities and to enrich the museums. They were a mixture of greatness and absurdity, both of another age. This little world, for which the rest of the world seemed not to exist—(although its members knew it thoroughly through their business, and their distant relationships, and the long and extended voyages which they forced their sons to take,)—this little world, for which fame and celebrity in another land only were esteemed from the moment when they were welcomed and recognized by itself,—practised the severest discipline upon itself. Every member of it kept a watch upon himself and upon the rest. The result of all this was a collective conscience which masked all individual differences (more marked than elsewhere among the robust personalities of the place) under the veil of religious and moral uniformity. Everybody practised it, everybody believed in it. Not a single soul doubted it or would admit of doubt. It were impossible to know what took place in the depths of souls which were the more hermetically sealed against prying eyes inasmuch as they knew that they were surrounded by a narrow scrutiny, and that every man took upon himself the right to examine into the conscience of other men. It was said that even those who had left the country and thought themselves emancipated—as soon as they set foot in it again were dominated by the traditions, the habits, the atmosphere of the town: even the most skeptical were at once forced to practise and to believe. Not to believe would have seemed to them an offense against Nature. Not to believe was the mark of an inferior caste, a sign of bad breeding. It was never admitted that a man of their world could possibly be absolved of his religious duties. If a man did not practise their religion, he was at once unclassed, and all doors were closed to him.

Even the weight of such discipline was apparently not enough for them. The men of this little world were not closely bound enough within their caste. Within the great *Verein* they had formed a number of smaller *Vereine* by way of binding their fetters fast. There were several hundred of them: and they were increasing every year. There were *Vereine* for everything: for philanthropy, charitable work, commercial work, work that was both charitable and commercial, for the arts, for the sciences, for singing, music, spiritual exercises, physical exercises, merely to provide excuses for meeting and taking their amusement collectively: there were *Vereine* for the various districts and the various corporations: there were *Vereine* for men of the same position in the world, the same degree of wealth, men of the same social weight, who wore the same handle to their names. It was even said that an attempt had been made to form a *Verein* for the *Vereinlosen* (those who did not belong to any *Verein*): though not twelve such people had been forthcoming.

Within this triple bandage of town, caste, and union, the soul was cramped and bound. Character was suppressed by a secret constraint. The majority were brought up to it from childhood—had been for centuries: and they found it good: they would have thought it improper and unhealthy to go without these bandages. Their satisfied smiles gave no indication of the discomfort they might be feeling. But Nature always took her revenge. Every now and then there would arise some individual in revolt, some vigorous artist or unbridled thinker who would brutally break his bonds and set the city fathers by the ears. They were so clever that, if the rebel had not been stifled in the embryo, and became the stronger, they never troubled to fight him—(a fight might have produced all sorts of scandalous outbreaks):—they bought him up. If he were a painter, they sent him to the museum: if he were a thinker, to the libraries. It was quite useless for him to roar out all sorts of outrageous things: they pretended not to hear him. It was in vain for him to protest his independence: they incorporated him as one of themselves. So the effect of the poison was neutralized: it was the homeopathic treatment.—But such cases were rare, most of the rebellions never reached the light of day.

Their peaceful houses concealed unsuspected tragedies. The master of a great house would go quietly and throw himself into the river, and leave no explanation. Sometimes a man would go into retirement for six months, sometimes he would send his wife to an asylum to restore her mind. Such things were spoken of quite openly, as though they were quite natural, with that placidity which is one of the great features of the town, the inhabitants of which are able to maintain it in the face of suffering and death.

These solid burgesses, who were hard upon themselves because they knew their own worth, were much less hard on others because they esteemed them less. They were quite liberal towards the foreigners dwelling in the town like Christophe, German professors, and political refugees, because they had no sort of feeling about them. And, besides, they loved intelligence. Advanced ideas had no terrors for them: they knew that their sons were impervious to their influence. They were coldly cordial to their guests, and kept them at a distance.

Christophe did not need to have these things underlined. He was in a state of raw sensitiveness which left his feelings absolutely unprotected: he was only too ready to see egoism and indifference everywhere, and to withdraw into himself.

To make matters worse, Braun's patients, and the very limited circle to which his wife belonged, all moved in a little Protestant society which was particularly strict. Christophe was ill-regarded by them both as a Papist by origin and a heretic in fact. For his part, he found many things which shocked him. Although he no longer believed, yet he bore the marks of his inherited Catholicism, which was more poetic than a matter of reason, more indulgent towards Nature, and never suffered the self-torment of trying to explain and understand what to love and what not to love: and also he had the habits of intellectual and moral freedom which he had unwittingly come by in Paris. It was inevitable that he should come into collision with the little pious groups of people in whom all the defects of the Calvinistic spirit were marked and exaggerated: a rationalistic religion, which clipped the wings of faith and left it dangling over the abyss: for it started with an *a priori* reason which was open to discussion like all mysticism: it was no longer poetry,

nor was it prose, it was poetry translated into prose. They had pride of intellect, an absolute, dangerous faith in reason—in *their* reason. They could not believe in God or in immortality: but they believed in reason as a Catholic believes in the Pope, or as a fetish-worshiper believes in his idol. They never even dreamed of discussing the matter. In vain did life contradict it; they would rather have denied life. They had no psychology, no understanding of Nature, or of the hidden forces, the roots of humanity, the "Spirit of the Earth." They fashioned a scheme of life and nature that were childish, silly, arbitrary figments. Some of them were cultured and practical people who had seen and read much. But they never saw or read anything as it actually was: they always reduced it to an abstraction. They were poor-blooded: they had high moral qualities: but they were not human enough: and that is the cardinal sin. Their purity of heart, which was often very real, noble, and naïve, sometimes comic, unfortunately, in certain cases, became tragic: it made them hard in their dealings with others, and produced in them a tranquil inhumanity, self-confident and free from anger, which was quite appalling. How should they hesitate? Had they not truth, right, virtue, on their side? Did they not receive revelation direct from their hallowed reason? Reason is a hard sun: it gives light, but it blinds. In that withering light, without shade or mist, human beings grow pallid, the blood is sucked up from their hearts.

Now, if there was one thing in the world that was utterly meaningless to Christophe at that time it was reason. To his eyes its sun only lit up the walls of the abyss, and neither showed him the means of escape nor even enabled him to sound its depths.

As for the artistic world, Christophe had little opportunity and less desire to mix with it. The musicians were for the most part worthy conservatives of the neo-Schumann period and "Brahmins" of the type against which Christophe had formerly broken many a lance. There were two exceptions: Krebs, the organist, who kept a famous confectioner's shop, an honest man and a good musician, who would have been an even better one if, to adapt the quip of one of his fellow-

countrymen, "he had not been seated on a Pegasus which he overfed with hay,"—and a young Jewish composer of an original talent, a man full of a vigorous and turbid sap, who had a business in the Swiss trade: wood carvings, chalets, and Berne bears. They were more independent than the others, no doubt because they did not make a trade of their art, and they would have been very glad to come in touch with Christophe: and at any other time Christophe would have been interested to know them: but at this period of his life, all artistic and human curiosity was blunted in him: he was more conscious of the division between himself and other men than of the bond of union.

His only friend, the confidant of his thoughts, was the river that ran through the city—the same mighty fatherly river that washed the walls of his native town up north. In the river Christophe could recover the memory of his childish dreams. . . . But in his sorrow they took on, like the Rhine itself, a darkling hue. In the dying day he would lean against the parapet of the embankment and look down at the rushing river, the fused and fusing, heavy, opaque, and hurrying mass, which was always like a dream of the past, wherein nothing could be clearly seen but great moving veils, thousands of streams, currents, eddies twisting into form, then fading away: it was like the blurred procession of mental images in a fevered mind: forever taking shape, forever melting away. Over this twilight dream there skimmed phantom ferry-boats, like coffins, with never a human form in them. Darker grew the night. The river became bronze. The lights upon its banks made its armor shine with an inky blackness, casting dim reflections, the coppery reflections of the gas lamps, the moon-like reflections of the electric lights, the blood-red reflections of the candles in the windows of the houses. The river's murmur filled the darkness with its eternal muttering that was far more sad than the monotony of the sea. . . .

For hours together Christophe would stand drinking in the song of death and weariness of life. Only with difficulty could he tear himself away: then he would climb up to the house again, up the steep alleys with their red steps, which were worn away in the middle: broken in soul and body he would cling

to the iron hand-rail fastened to the walls, which gleamed under the light thrown down from the empty square on the hilltop in front of the church that was shrouded in darkness. . . .

He could not understand why men went on living. When he remembered the struggles he had seen, he felt a bitter admiration for the undying faith of humanity. Ideas succeeded the ideas most directly opposed to them, reaction followed action: —democracy, aristocracy: socialism, individualism: romanticism, classicism: progress, tradition:—and so on to the end of time. Each new generation, consumed in its own heat in less than ten years, believed steadfastly that it alone had reached the zenith, and hurled its predecessors down and stoned them: each new generation bestirred itself, and shouted, and took to itself the power and the glory, only to be hurled down and stoned in turn by its successors and so to disappear. Whose turn next? . . .

The composition of music was no longer a refuge for Christophe: it was intermittent, irregular, aimless. Write? For whom? For men? He was passing through an acute phase of misanthropy. For himself? He was only too conscious of the vanity of art with its impotence to top the void of death. Only now and then the blind force that was in him would raise him on its mighty beating wing and then fall back, worn out by the effort. He was like a storm cloud rumbling in the darkness. With Olivier gone, he had nothing left. He hurled himself against everything that had filled his life, against the feelings that he had thought to share with others, against the thoughts which he had in imagination had in common with the rest of humanity. It seemed to him now that he had been the plaything of an illusion: the whole life of society was based upon a colossal misunderstanding originating in speech. We imagine that one man's thought can communicate with the thought of other men. In reality the connection lies only in words. We say and hear words: not one word has the same meaning in the mouths of two different men. Words outrun the reality of life. We speak of love and hatred. There is neither love nor hatred, friends nor enemies, no faith, no passion, neither good nor evil. There are only cold reflections of the lights falling from vanished suns, stars that have been

dead for ages. . . . Friends? There is no lack of people to claim that name. But what a stale reality is represented by their friendship! What is friendship in the sense of the every-day world? How many minutes of his life does he who thinks himself a friend give to the pale memory of his friend? What would he sacrifice to him, not of the things that are necessary, but of his superfluity, his leisure, his waste time? What had Christophe sacrificed for Olivier?—(For he made no exception in his own case: he excepted only Olivier from the state of nothingness into which he cast all human beings).—Art is no more true than love. What room does it really occupy in life? With what sort of love do they love it, they who declare their devotion to it? . . . The poverty of human feeling is inconceivable. Outside the instincts of species, the cosmic force which is the lever of the world, nothing exists save a scattered dust of emotion. The majority of men have not vitality enough to give themselves wholly to any passion. They spare themselves and save their force with cowardly prudence. They are a little of everything and nothing absolutely. A man who gives himself without counting the cost, to everything that he does, everything that he suffers, everything that he loves, everything that he hates, is a prodigy, the greatest that is granted to us here on earth. Passion is like genius: a miracle, which is as much as to say that it does not exist.

So thought Christophe: and life was on the verge of giving him the lie in a terrible fashion. The miracle is everywhere, like fire in stone: friction brings it forth. We have little notion of the demons who lie slumbering within ourselves. . . .

. . . *Pero non mi destar, deh! parla basso!* . . .

One evening when he was improvising at the piano, Anna got up and went out, as she often did when Christophe was playing. Apparently his music bored her. Christophe had ceased to notice it: he was indifferent to anything she might think. He went on playing: then he had an idea which he wished to write down, and stopped short and hurried up to his room for the necessary paper. As he opened the door into the next room and, with head down, rushed into the darkness,

he bumped violently against a figure standing motionless just inside. Anna. . . . The shock and the surprise made her cry out. Christophe was anxious to know if he had hurt her, and took her hands in his. Her hands were frozen. She seemed to shiver,—no doubt from the shock. She muttered a vague explanation of her presence there:

"I was looking in the dining-room. . . ."

He did not hear what she was looking for: and perhaps she did not say what it was. It seemed to him odd that she should go about looking for something without a light. But he was used to Anna's singular ways and paid no attention to it.

An hour later he returned to the little parlor where he used to spend the evening with Braun and Anna. He sat at the table near the lamp, writing. Anna was on his right at the table, sewing, with her head bent over her work. Behind them, in an armchair, near the fire, Braun was reading a magazine. They were all three silent. At intervals they could hear the pattering of the rain on the gravel in the garden. To get away from her Christophe sat with his back turned to Anna. Opposite him on the wall was a mirror which reflected the table, the lamp, the two faces bending over their work. It seemed to Christophe that Anna was looking at him. At first he did not pay much attention to it; then, as he could not shake off the idea, he began to feel uneasy and he looked up at the mirror and saw. . . . She *was* looking at him. And in such a way! He was petrified with amazement, held his breath, watched her. She did not know that he was watching her. The light of the lamp was cast upon her pale face, the silent solemnity of which seemed now to be fiercely concentrated. Her eyes—those strange eyes that he had never been able squarely to see—were fixed upon him: they were dark blue, with large pupils, and the expression in them was burning and hard: they were fastened upon him, searching through him with dumb insistent ardor. Her eyes? Could they be her eyes? He saw them and could not believe it. Did he really see them? He turned suddenly. . . . Her eyes were lowered. He tried to talk to her, to force her to look up at him. Impassively she replied without raising her eyes from her work or from their refuge behind the impenetrable shadow of her bluish eyelids with their short thick lashes. If Christophe

had not been quite positive of what he had seen, he would have believed that he had been the victim of an illusion. But he knew what he had seen, and he could not explain it away.

However, as his mind was engrossed in his work and he found Anna very uninteresting, the strange impression made on him did not occupy him for long.

A week later Christophe was trying over a song he had just composed, on the piano. Braun, who had a mania, due partly to marital vanity and partly to love of teasing, for worrying his wife to sing and play, had been particularly insistent that evening. As a rule Anna only replied with a curt "No"; after which she would not even trouble to reply to his requests, entreaties, and pleasantries: she would press her lips together and seem not to hear. On this occasion, to Braun's and Christophe's astonishment, she folded up her work, got up, and went to the piano. She sang the song which she had never even read. It was a sort of miracle:—*the* miracle. The deep tones of her voice bore not the faintest resemblance to the rather raucous and husky voice in which she spoke. With absolute sureness from the very first note, without a shade of difficulty, without the smallest effort, she endued the melody with a grandeur that was both moving and pure: and she rose to an intensity of passion which made Christophe shiver: for it seemed to him to be the very voice of his own heart. He looked at her in amazement while she was singing, and at last, for the first time, he saw her as she was. He saw her dark eyes in which there was kindled a light of wildness, he saw her wide, passionate mouth with its clear-cut lips, the voluptuous, rather heavy and cruel smile, her strong white teeth, her beautiful strong hands, one of which was laid on the rack of the piano, and the sturdy frame of her body cramped by her clothes, emaciated by a life of economy and poverty, though it was easy to divine the youth, the vigor, and the harmony, that were concealed by her gown.

She stopped singing, and went and sat down with her hands folded in her lap. Braun complimented her: but to his way of thinking there had been a lack of softness in her singing. Christophe said nothing. He sat watching her. She smiled vaguely, knowing that he was looking at her. All the evening there was a complete silence between them. She knew quite

well that she had risen above herself, or rather, that she had been "herself," for the first time. And she could not understand why.

From that day on Christophe began to observe Anna closely. She had relapsed into her sullenness, her cold indifference, and her mania for work, which exasperated even her husband, while beneath it all she lulled the obscure thoughts of her troubled nature. It was in vain that Christophe watched her, he never found her anything but the stiff ordinary woman of their first acquaintance. Sometimes she would sit lost in thought, doing nothing, with her eyes staring straight in front of her. They would leave her so, and come back a quarter of an hour later and find her just the same: she would never stir. When her husband asked her what she was thinking of, she would rouse herself from her torpor and smile and say that she was thinking of nothing. And she spoke the truth.

There was nothing capable of upsetting her equanimity. One day when she was dressing, her spirit-lamp burst. In an instant Anna was a mass of flames. The maid rushed away screaming for help. Braun lost his head, flung himself about, shouted and yelled, and almost fell ill. Anna tore away the hooks of her dressing-gown, slipped off her skirt just as it was beginning to burn, and stamped on it. When Christophe ran in excitedly with a water-bottle which he had blindly seized, he found Anna standing on a chair, in her petticoat with her arms bare, calmly putting out the burning curtains with her hands. She got burnt, said nothing about it, and only seemed to be put out at being seen in such a costume. She blushed, awkwardly covered her shoulders with her arms, and with an air of offended dignity ran away into the next room. Christophe admired her calmness: but he could not tell whether it proved her courage or her insensibility. He was inclined to the latter explanation. Indeed, Anna seemed to take no interest in anything, or in other people, or in herself. Christophe doubted even whether she had a heart.

He had no doubt at all after a little scene which he happened to witness. Anna had a little black dog, with intelligent soft eyes, which was the spoiled darling of the household. Braun

adored it. Christophe used to take it to his room when he shut himself up to work; and often, when the door was closed, instead of working, he would play with it. When he went out, the dog was always waiting for him at the door, looking out for him, to follow at his heels: for he always wanted a companion in his walks. She would run in front of him, pattering along with her little paws moving so fast that they seemed to fly. Every now and then she would stop in pride at walking faster than he: and she would look at him and draw herself up archly. She used to beg, and bark furiously at a piece of wood: but directly she saw another dog in the distance she would tear away as fast as she could and tremblingly take refuge between Christophe's legs. Christophe loved her and used to laugh at her. Since he had held aloof from men he had come nearer to the brutes: he found them pitiful and touching. The poor beasts surrender with such absolute confidence to those who are kind to them! Man is so much the master of their life and death that those who are cruel to the weak creatures delivered into their hands are guilty of an abominable abuse of power.

Affectionate though the pretty creature was with every one, she had a marked preference for Anna. She did nothing to attract the dog: but she liked to stroke her and let her snuggle down in her lap, and see that she was fed, and she seemed to love her as much as she was capable of loving anything. One day the dog failed to get out of the way of a motor-car. She was run over almost under the very eyes of her masters. She was still alive and yelping pitiably. Braun ran out of the house bareheaded: he picked up the bleeding mass and tried to relieve the dog's suffering. Anna came up, looked down without so much as stooping, made a face of disgust, and went away again. Braun watched the little creature's agony with tears in his eyes. Christophe was striding up and down the garden with clenched fists. He heard Anna quietly giving orders to the servant. He could not help crying out:

"It doesn't affect you at all?"

She replied:

"There's nothing to be done. It is better not to think of it."

He felt that he hated her: then he was struck by the grotesque-

ness of her reply: and he laughed. He thought it would be well if Anna could give him her recipe for avoiding the thought of sad things, and that life must be very easy for those who are lucky enough to have no heart. He fancied that if Braun were to die, Anna would hardly be put out by it, and he felt glad that he was not married. His solitude seemed less sad to him than the fetters of habit that bind a man for life to a creature to whom he may be an object of hatred, or worse still, nothing at all. It was very certain that this woman loved no one. She hardly existed. The atmosphere of piety had withered her.

She took Christophe by surprise one day at the end of October. —They were at dinner. He was talking to Braun about a crime of passion which was the sole topic in the town. In the country two Italian girls, sisters, had fallen in love with the same man. They were both unable to make the sacrifice with a good grace, and so they had drawn lots as to who should yield. But when the lot was cast the girl who had lost showed little inclination to abide by the decision. The other was enraged by such faithlessness. From insult they came to blows, and even to fighting with knives: then, suddenly, the wind changed: they kissed each other, and wept, and vowed that they could not live without each other: and, as they could not submit to sharing the lover, they made up their minds that he should be killed. This they did. One night the two girls invited the lover to their room, and he was congratulating himself upon such twofold favor; and, while one girl clasped him passionately in her arms, the other no less passionately stabbed him in the back. It chanced that his cries were heard. People came and tore him in a pitiable condition from the embraces of his charmers, and they were arrested. They protested that it was no one's business, and that they alone were interested in the matter, and that, from the moment when they had agreed to rid themselves of their own property, it was no one else's concern. Their victim was not a little inclined to agree with their line of argument: but the law was unable to follow it. And Braun could not understand it either.

"They are mad," he said. "They should be shut up in an asylum. Beasts! . . . I can understand a man killing himself for love. I can even understand a man killing the woman

he loves if she deceives him. . . . I don't mean that I would excuse his doing so: but I am prepared to admit that there is a remnant of primitive savagery in us: it is barbarous, but it is logical: you kill the person who makes you suffer. But for a woman to kill the man she loves, without bitterness, without hatred, simply because another woman loves him, is nothing but madness. . . . Can you understand it, Christophe?"

"Peuh!" said Christophe. "I'm quite used to being unable to understand things. Love is madness."

Anna, who had said nothing, and seemed not to be listening, said in her calm voice:

"There is nothing irrational in it. It is quite natural. When a woman loves, she wants to destroy the man she loves so that no one else may have him."

Braun looked at his wife aghast, thumped on the table, folded his arms, and said:

"Where on earth did you get that from? . . . What? So you must put your oar in, must you? What the devil do you know about it?"

Anna blushed a little, and said no more. Braun went on:

"When a woman loves, she wants to destroy, does she? That's a nice sort of thing to say! To destroy any one who is dear to you is to destroy yourself.—On the contrary, when one loves, the natural feeling is to do good to the person you love, to cherish him, to defend him, to be kind to him, to be kind to everything and everybody. Love is paradise on earth."

Anna sat staring into the darkness, and let him talk, and then shook her head, and said coldly:

"A woman is not kind when she loves."

Christophe did not renew the experiment of hearing Anna sing. He was afraid . . . of disillusion, or what? He could not tell. Anna was just as fearful. She would never stay in the room when he began to play.

But one evening in November, as he was reading by the fire, he saw Anna sitting with her sewing in her lap, deep in one of her reveries. She was looking blankly in front of her, and Christophe thought he saw in her eyes the strangely burning light of the other evening. He closed his book. She felt his

eyes upon her, and picked up her sewing. With her eyelids down she saw everything. He got up and said:

"Come."

She stared at him, and there was still a little uneasiness in her eyes: she understood, and followed him.

"Where are you going?" asked Braun.

"To the piano," replied Christophe.

He played. She sang. At once he found her just as she had been on the first occasion. She entered the heroic world of music as a matter of course, as though it were her own. He tested her yet further, and went on to a second song, then to a third, more passionate, which let loose in her the whole gamut of passion, uplifting both herself and him: then, as they reached a very paroxysm, he stopped short and asked her, staring straight into her eyes:

"Tell me, what woman are you?"

Anna replied:

"I do not know."

He said brutally:

"What is there in you that makes you sing like that?"

She replied:

"Only what you put there to make me sing."

"Yes? Well, it is not out of place. I'm wondering whether I created it or you. How do you come to think of such things?"

"I don't know. I think I am no longer myself when I am singing."

"I think it is only then that you are yourself."

They said no more. Her cheeks were wet with a slight perspiration. Her bosom heaved, but she spoke no word. She stared at the lighted candles, and mechanically scratched away the wax that had trickled down the side of the candlestick. He drummed on the keys as he sat looking at her. They exchanged a few awkward remarks, brusquely and roughly, and then they tried a commonplace remark or two, and finally relapsed into silence, being fearful of probing any farther. . . .

Next day they hardly spoke: they stole glances at each other in a sort of dread. But they made it a habit to play and sing together in the evening. Before long they began in the after-

noon, giving a little more time to it each day. Always the same incomprehensible passion would take possession of her with the very first bars, and set her flaming from head to foot, and, while the music lasted, make of the ordinary little woman an imperious Venus, the incarnation of all the furies of the soul. Braun was surprised at Anna's sudden craze for singing, but did not take the trouble to discover any explanation for a mere feminine caprice: he was often present at their little concerts, marked time with his head, gave his advice, and was perfectly happy, although he would have preferred softer, sweeter music: such an expenditure of energy seemed to him exaggerated and unnecessary. Christophe breathed freely in the atmosphere of danger: but he was losing his head: he was weakened by the crisis through which he had passed, and could not resist, and lost consciousness of what was happening to him without perceiving what was happening to Anna. One afternoon, in the middle of a song, with all the frantic ardor of it in full blast, she suddenly stopped, and left the room without making any explanation. Christophe waited for her: she did not return. Half an hour later, as he was going down the passage past Anna's room, through the half-open door he saw her absorbed in grim prayer, with all expression frozen from her face.

However, a slight, very slight, feeling of confidence cropped up between them. He tried to make her talk about her past: only with great difficulty could he induce her to tell him a few commonplace details. Thanks to Braun's easy, indiscreet good nature, he was able to gain a glimpse into her intimate life.

She was a native of the town. Her maiden name was Anna Maria Senfl. Her father, Martin Senfl, was a member of an old commercial house, very old and enormously rich, in whom pride of caste and religious strictness were ingrained. Being of an adventurous temper, like many of his fellow-countrymen, he had spent several years abroad in the East and in South America: he had even made bold exploring expeditions in Central Asia, whither he had gone to advance the commercial interests of his house, for love of science, and for his own pleasure. By dint of rolling through the world, he had not only gathered no moss, but had also rid himself of that which covered him,

the moss of his old prejudices. When, therefore, he returned to his own country, being of a warm temper and an obstinate mind, he married, in face of the indignant protests of his family, the daughter of a farmer of the surrounding country, a lady of doubtful reputation who had originally been his mistress. Marriage had been the only available means of keeping the beautiful girl to himself, and he could not do without her. After having exercised its veto in vain, his family absolutely closed its doors to its erring member who had set aside its sacrosanct authority. The town—all those, that is, who mattered, who, as usual, were absolutely united in any matter that touched the moral dignity of the community—sided bodily against the rash couple. The explorer learned to his cost that it is no less dangerous to traverse the prejudice of the people in a country inhabited by the sectaries of Christ, than in a country inhabited by those of the Grand Lama. He had not been strong enough to live without public opinion. He had more than jeopardized his patrimony: he could find no employment: everything was closed to him. He wore himself out in futile wrath against the affronts of the implacable town. His health, undermined by excess and fever, could not bear up against it. He died of a flux of blood five months after his marriage. Four months later, his wife, a good creature, but weak and feather-brained, who had never lived through a day since her marriage without weeping, died in childbirth, casting the infant Anna upon the shores which she was leaving.

Martin's mother was alive. Even when they were dying she had not forgiven her son or the woman whom she had refused to acknowledge as her daughter-in-law. But when the woman died—and Divine vengeance was appeased—she took the child and looked after her. She was a woman of the narrowest piety: she was rich and mean, and kept a draper's shop in a gloomy street in the old town. She treated her son's daughter less as a grandchild than as an orphan taken in out of charity, and therefore occupying more or less the position of a servant by way of payment. However, she gave her a careful education: but she never departed from her attitude of suspicious strictness towards her: it seemed as though she considered the child guilty of her parents' sin, and therefore set herself to chasten and

chastise the sin in her. She never allowed her any amusement: she punished everything that was natural in her gestures, words, thoughts, as a crime. She killed all joy in her young life. From a very early age Anna was accustomed to being bored in church and disguising the fact: she was hemmed in by the terrors of hell: every Sunday the child's heavy-lidded eyes used to see them at the door of the old *Münster,* in the shape of the immodest and distorted statues with a fire burning between their legs, while round their loins crawled toads and snakes. She became accustomed to suppressing her instincts and lying to herself. As soon as she was old enough to help her grandmother, she was kept busy from morning to night in the dark gloomy shop. She assimilated the habits of those around her, the spirit of order, grim economy, futile privations, the bored indifference, the contemptuous, ungracious conception of life, which is the natural consequence of religious beliefs in those who are not naturally religious. She was so wholly given up to her piety as to seem rather absurd even to the old woman: she indulged in far too many fasts and macerations: at one period she even went so far as to wear corsets embellished with pins, which stuck into her flesh with every movement. She was seen to go pale, but no one knew what was the matter. At last, when she fainted, a doctor was called in. She refused to allow him to examine her—(she would have died rather than undress in the presence of a man)—but she confessed: and the doctor was so angry about it that she promised not to do it again. To make quite sure her grandmother thereafter took to inspecting her clothes. In such self-torture Anna did not, as might have been supposed, find any mystic pleasure: she had little imagination, she would never have understood the poetry of saints like Francis of Assisi or Teresa. Her piety was sad and materialistic. When she tormented herself, it was not in any hope of advantage to be gained in the next world, but came only from a cruel boredom which rebounded against herself, so that she only found in it an almost angry pleasure in hurting herself. Singularly enough, her hard, cold spirit was, like her grandmother's, open to the influence of music, though she never knew how profound that influence was. She was impervious to all the other arts: probably she had never looked at a picture in her life: she

seemed to have no sense of plastic beauty, for she was lacking in taste, owing to her proud and wilful indifference; the idea of a beautiful body only awoke in her the idea of nakedness, that is to say, like the peasant of whom Tolstoy speaks, a feeling of repugnance, which was all the stronger in Anna inasmuch as she was dimly aware, in her relations with other people whom she liked, of the vague sting of desire far more than of the calm impression of esthetic judgment. She had no more idea of her own beauty than of her suppressed instincts: or rather, she refused to have any idea of it: and with her habitual self-deception she succeeded in deluding herself.

Braun met her at a marriage feast at which she was present, quite unusually for her: for she was hardly ever invited because of the evil reputation which clung to her from her improper origin. She was twenty-two. He marked her out; not that she made any attempt to attract attention. She sat next him at dinner: she was very stiff and badly dressed, and she hardly ever opened her mouth. But Braun never stopped talking to her, in a monologue, all through the meal, and he went away in raptures. With his usual penetration, he had been struck by his neighbor's air of original simplicity: he had admired her common sense and her coolness: also he appreciated her healthiness and the solid domestic qualities which she seemed to him to possess. He called on her grandmother, called again, proposed, and was accepted. She was given no dowry: Madame Senfl had left all the wealth of her family to the town to encourage trade abroad.

At no point in her life had the young wife had any love for her husband; the idea of such a thing never seemed to her to play any part in the life of an honest woman, but rather to be properly set aside as guilty. But she knew the worth of Braun's kindness: she was grateful to him, though she never showed it, for having married her in spite of her doubtful origin. Besides, she had a very strong feeling of honor between husband and wife. For the first seven years of their married life nothing had occurred to disturb their union. They lived side by side, as it were, did not understand each other, and never worried about it: in the eyes of the world they were a model couple. They went out very little. Braun had a fairly large

practice, but he had never succeeded in making his friends accept his wife. No one liked her: and the stigma of her birth was not yet quite obliterated. Anna, for her part, never put herself out in order to gain admission to society. She was resentful on account of the scorn which had cast a cloud on her childhood. Besides, she was never at her ease in society, and she was not sorry to be left out of it. She paid and received a few inevitable calls, such as her husband's interests made necessary. Her callers were inquisitive and scandalous women of the middle-class. Anna had not the slightest interest in their gossip, and she never took the trouble to conceal her indifference. That is what such people never forgive. So her callers grew fewer and more far between, and Anna was left alone. That was what she wanted: nothing could then come and break in upon the dreams over which she brooded, and the obscure thrill and humming of life that was ever in her body.

Meanwhile for some weeks Anna looked very unwell. Her face grew thin and pale. She avoided both Christophe and Braun. She spent her days in her room, lost in thought, and she never replied when she was spoken to. Usually Braun did not take much notice of her feminine caprices. He would explain them to Christophe at length. Like all men fated to be deceived by women he flattered himself that he knew them through and through. He did know something about them, as a matter of fact, but a little knowledge is quite useless. He knew that women often have fits of persistent moodiness and blindly sullen antagonism: and it was his opinion that it was necessary at such times to leave them alone, and to make no attempt to understand or, above all, to find out what they were doing in the dangerous unconscious world in which their minds were steeped. Nevertheless he did begin to grow anxious about Anna. He thought that her pining must be the result of her mode of life, always shut up, never going outside the town, hardly ever out of the house. He wanted her to go for walks: but he could hardly ever go with her: the whole day on Sunday was taken up with her pious duties, and on the other days of the week he had consultations all day long. As for Christophe, he avoided going out with her. Once or twice they had gone for a short walk together, as far as the gates of the town: they

were bored to death. Their conversation came to a standstill. Nature seemed not to exist for Anna: she never saw anything: the country was to her only grass and stones: her insensibility was chilling. Christophe tried once to make her admire a beautiful view. She looked, smiled coldly, and said, with an effort towards being pleasant:

"Oh! yes, it is very mystic. . . ."

She said it just as she might have said:

"The sun is very hot."

Christophe was so irritated that he dug his nails into the palms of his hands. After that he never asked her anything: and when she was going out he always made some excuse and stayed in his room.

In reality it was not true that Anna was insensible to Nature. She did not like what are conventionally called beautiful landscapes: she could see no difference between them and other landscapes. But she loved the country whatever it might be like—just earth and air. Only she had no more idea of it than of her other strong feelings: and those who lived with her had even less idea of it.

Braun so far insisted as to induce his wife to make a day's excursion into the outskirts of the town. She was so bored with him that she consented for the sake of peace. It was arranged that they should go on the Sunday. At the last moment, the doctor, who had been looking forward to it with childlike glee, was detained by an urgent case of illness. Christophe went with Anna.

It was a fine winter day with no snow: a pure cold air, a clear sky, a flaming sun, and an icy wind. They went out on a little local railway which took them to one of the lines of blue hills which formed a distant halo round the town. Their compartment was full: they were separated. They did not speak to each other. Anna was in a gloomy mood: the day before she had declared, to Braun's surprise, that she would not go to church on Sunday. For the first time in her life she missed a service. Was it revolt? . . . Who could tell what struggles were taking place in her? She stared blankly at the seat in front of her, she was pale: she was eating her heart out.

They got out of the train. The coldness and antagonism between them did not disappear during the first part of their walk. They stepped out side by side: she walked with a firm stride and looked at nothing: her hands were free: she swung her arms: her heels rang out on the frozen earth.—Gradually her face quickened into life. The swiftness of their pace brought the color to her pale cheeks. Her lips parted to drink in the keen air. At the turn of a zigzag path she began to climb straight up the hillside like a goat; she scrambled along the edge of a quarry, where she was in great danger of falling, clinging to the shrubs. Christophe followed her. She climbed faster and faster, slipping, stopping herself by clutching at the grass with her hands. Christophe shouted to her to stop. She made no reply, but went on climbing on all fours. They passed through the mists which hung above the valley like a silvery gauze rent here and there by the bushes: and they stood in the warm sunlight of the uplands. When she reached the summit she stopped: her face was aglow: her mouth was open, and she was breathing heavily. Ironically she looked down at Christophe scaling the slope, took off her cloak, flung it at him, then without giving him time to take his breath, she darted on. Christophe ran after her. They warmed to the game: the air intoxicated them. She plunged down a steep slope: the stones gave way under her feet: she did not falter, she slithered, jumped, sped down like an arrow. Every now and then she would dart a glance behind her to see how much she had gained on Christophe. He was close upon her. She plunged into a wood. The dead leaves crackled under their footsteps: the branches which she thrust aside whipped back into his face. She stumbled over the roots of a tree. He caught her. She struggled, lunging out with hands and feet, struck him hard, trying to knock him off: she screamed and laughed. Her bosom heaved against him: for a moment their cheeks touched: he tasted the sweat that lay on Anna's brow: he breathed the scent of her moist hair. She pushed away from him and looked at him, unmoved, with defiant eyes. He was amazed at her strength, which all went for nothing in her ordinary life.

They went to the nearest village, joyfully trampling the dry stubble crisping beneath their feet. In front of them whirled

the crows who were ransacking the fields. The sun was burning, the wind was biting. He held Anna's arm. She had on a rather thin dress: through the stuff he could feel the moisture and the tingling warmth of her body. He wanted her to put on her cloak once more: she refused, and in bravado undid the hooks at her neck. They lunched at an inn, the sign of which bore the figure of a "wild man" (*Zum wilden Mann*). A little pine-tree grew in front of the door. The dining-room was decorated with German quatrains, and two chromolithographs, one of which was sentimental: *In the Spring* (*Im Frühling*), and the other patriotic: *The Battle of Saint Jacques,* and a crucifix with a skull at the foot of the cross. Anna had a voracious appetite, such as Christophe had never known her to have. They drank freely of the ordinary white wine. After their meal they set out once more across the fields, in a blithe spirit of companionship. In neither was there any equivocal thought. They were thinking only of the pleasure of their walk, the singing in their blood, and the whipping, nipping air. Anna's tongue was loosed. She was no longer on her guard: she said just whatever came into her mind.

She talked about her childhood, and how her grandmother used to take her to the house of an old friend who lived near the cathedral: and while the old ladies talked they sent her into the garden over which there hung the shadow of the *Münster*. She used to sit in a corner and never stir: she used to listen to the shivering of the leaves, and watch the busy swarming insects: and she used to be both pleased and afraid.—(She made no mention of her fear of devils: her imagination was obsessed by it: she had been told that they prowled round churches but never dared enter: and she used to believe that they appeared in the shape of animals: spiders, lizards, ants, all the hideous creatures that swarmed about her, under the leaves, over the earth, or in the crannies of the walls).—Then she told him about the house she used to live in, and her sunless room: she remembered it with pleasure: she used to spend many sleepless nights there, telling herself things. . . .

"What things?"

"Silly things."

"Tell me."

She shook her head in refusal.

"Why not?"

She blushed, then laughed, and added:

"In the daytime too, while I was at work."

She thought for a moment, laughed once more, and then said:

"They were silly things, bad things."

He said, jokingly:

"Weren't you afraid?"

"Of what?"

"Of being damned?"

The expression in her eyes froze.

"You mustn't talk of that," she said.

He turned the conversation. He marveled at the strength she had shown a short while before in their scuffle. She resumed her confiding expression and told him of her girlish achievements—(she said "boyish," for, when she was a child she had always longed to join in the games and fights of the boys).—On one occasion when she was with a little boy who was a head taller than herself she had suddenly struck him with her fist, hoping that he would strike her back. But he ran away yelling that she was beating him. Once, again, in the country she had climbed on to the back of a black cow as she was grazing: the terrified beast flung her against a tree, and she had narrowly escaped being killed. Once she took it into her head to jump out of a first-floor window because she had dared herself to do it: she was lucky enough to get off with a sprain. She used to invent strange, dangerous gymnastics when she was left alone in the house: she used to subject her body to all sorts of queer experiments.

"Who would think it of you now, to see you looking so solemn? . . ."

"Oh!" she said, "if you were to see me sometimes when I am alone in my room!"

"What! Even now?"

She laughed. She asked him—jumping from one subject to another—if he were a shot.

He told her that he never shot. She said that she had once shot at a blackbird with a gun and had wounded it. He waxed indignant.

"Oh!" she said. "What does it matter?"

"Have you no heart?"

"I don't know."

"Don't you ever think the beasts are living creatures like ourselves?"

"Yes," she said. "Certainly. I wanted to ask you: do you think the beasts have souls?"

"Yes. I think so."

"The minister says not. But I think they have souls. . . . Sometimes," she added, "I think I must have been an animal in a previous existence."

He began to laugh.

"There's nothing to laugh at," she said (she laughed too). "That is one of the stories I used to tell myself when I was little. I used to pretend to be a cat, a dog, a bird, a foal, a heifer. I was conscious of all their desires. I wanted to be in their skins or their feathers for a little while: and it used to be as though I really was. You can't understand that?"

"You are a strange creature. But if you feel such kinship with the beasts how can you bear to hurt them?"

"One is always hurting some one. Some people hurt me. I hurt other people. That's the way of the world. I don't complain. We can't afford to be squeamish in life! I often hurt myself for the pleasure of it."

"Hurt yourself?"

"Myself. One day I hammered a nail into my hand, here."

"Why?"

"There wasn't any reason."

(She did not tell him that she had been trying to crucify herself.)

"Give me your hand," she said.

"What do you want it for?"

"Give it me."

He gave her his hand. She took it and crushed it until he cried out. They played, like peasants, at seeing how much they could hurt each other. They were happy and had no ulterior thought. The rest of the world, the fetters of their ordinary life, the sorrows of the past, fear of the future, the gathering storm within themselves, all had disappeared.

They had walked several miles, but they were not at all tired. Suddenly she stopped, flung herself down on the ground, and lay full length on the stubble, and said no more. She lay on her back with her hands behind her head and looked up at the sky. Oh! the peace of it, and the sweetness! . . . A few yards away a spring came bubbling up in an intermittent stream, like an artery beating, now faintly, now more strongly. The horizon took on a pearly hue. A mist hung over the purple earth from which the black naked trees stood out. The late winter sun was shining, the little pale gold sun sinking down to rest. Like gleaming arrows the birds cleft the air. The gentle voices of the country bells called and answered calling from village to village. . . . Christophe sat near Anna and looked down at her. She gave no thought to him. She was full of a heartfelt joy. Her beautiful lips smiled silently. He thought:

"Is that you? I do not know you."

"Nor I. Nor I. I think I must be some one else. I am no longer afraid: I am no longer afraid of Him. . . . Ah! How He stifled me, how He made me suffer! I seemed to have been nailed down in my coffin. . . . Now I can breathe: this body and this heart are mine. My body. My dear body. My heart is free and full of love. There is so much happiness in me! And I knew it not. I never knew myself! What have you done to me? . . ."

So he thought he could hear her softly sighing to herself. But she was thinking of nothing, only that she was happy, only that all was well.

The evening had begun to fall. Behind the gray and lilac veils of mist, about four o'clock, the sun, weary of life, was setting. Christophe got up and went to Anna. He bent down to her. She turned her face to him, still dizzy with looking up into the vast sky over which she seemed to have been hanging. A few seconds passed before she recognized him. Then her eyes stared at him with an enigmatic smile that told him of the unease that was in her. To escape the knowledge of it he closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them again she was still looking at him: and it seemed to him that for many days they had so looked into each other's eyes. It was as though they

were reading each other's soul. But they refused to admit what they had read there.

He held out his hand to her. She took it without a word. They went back to the village, the towers of which they could see shaped like the pope's nose in the heart of the valley: one of the towers had an empty storks' nest on the top of its roof of mossy tiles, looking just like a toque on a woman's head. At a cross-roads just outside the village they passed a fountain above which stood a little Catholic saint, a wooden Magdalene, graciously and a little mincingly holding out her arms. With an instinctive movement Anna responded to the gesture and held out her arms also, and she climbed on to the curb and filled the arms of the pretty little goddess with branches of holly and mountain-ash with such of their red berries as the birds and the frost had spared.

On the road they passed little groups of peasants and peasant women in their Sunday clothes: women with brown skins, very red cheeks, thick plaits coiled round their heads, light dresses, and hats with flowers. They wore white gloves and red cuffs. They were singing simple songs with shrill placid voices not very much in tune. In a stable a cow was mooing. A child with whooping-cough was coughing in a house. A little farther on there came up the nasal sound of a clarionet and a cornet. There was dancing in the village square between the little inn and the cemetery. Four musicians, perched on a table, were playing a tune. Anna and Christophe sat in front of the inn and watched the dancers. The couples were jostling and slanging each other vociferously. The girls were screaming for the pleasure of making a noise. The men drinking were beating time on the tables with their fists. At any other time such ponderous coarse joy would have disgusted Anna: but now she loved it: she had taken off her hat and was watching eagerly. Christophe poked fun at the burlesque solemnity of the music and the musicians. He fumbled in his pockets and produced a pencil and began to make lines and dots on the back of a hotel bill: he was writing dance music. The paper was soon covered: he asked for more, and these too he covered like the first with his big scrawling writing. Anna looked over his shoulder with her face near his and hummed over what he wrote: she tried to

guess how the phrases would end, and clapped her hands when she guessed right or when her guesses were falsified by some unexpected sally. When he had done Christophe took what he had written to the musicians. They were honest Suabians who knew their business, and they made it out without much difficulty. The melodies were sentimental, and of a burlesque humor, with strongly accented rhythms, punctuated, as it were, with bursts of laughter. It was impossible to resist their impetuous fun: nobody's feet could help dancing. Anna rushed into the throng; she gripped the first pair of hands held out to her and whirled about like a mad thing; a tortoise-shell pin dropped out of her hair and a few locks of it fell down and hung about her face. Christophe never took his eyes off her: he marveled at the fine healthy animal who hitherto had been condemned to silence and immobility by a pitiless system of discipline: he saw her as no one had ever seen her, as she really was under her borrowed mask: a Bacchante, drunk with life. She called to him. He ran to her and put his arms round her waist. They danced and danced until they whirled crashing into a wall. They stopped, dazed. Night was fully come. They rested for a moment and then said good-by to the company. Anna, who was usually so stiff with the common people, partly from embarrassment, partly from contempt, held out her hand to the musicians, the host of the inn, the village boys with whom she had been dancing.

Once more they were alone under the brilliant frozen sky retracing the paths across the fields by which they had come in the morning. Anna was still excited. She talked less and less, and then ceased altogether, as though she had succumbed to fatigue or to the mysterious emotion of the night. She leaned affectionately on Christophe. As they were going down the slope up which they had so blithely scrambled a few hours before, she sighed. They approached the station. As they came to the first house he stopped and looked at her. She looked up at him and smiled sadly. The train was just as crowded as it had been before, and they could not talk. He sat opposite her and devoured her with his eyes. Her eyes were lowered: she raised them and looked at him when she felt his eyes upon her: then she glanced away and he could not make her look at him

again. She sat gazing out into the night. A vague smile hovered about her lips which showed a little weariness at the corners. Then her smile disappeared. Her expression became mournful. He thought her mind must be engrossed by the rhythm of the train and he tried to speak to her. She replied coldly, without turning her head, with a single word. He tried to persuade himself that her fatigue was responsible for the change: but he knew that it was for a very different reason. The nearer they came to the town the more he saw Anna's face grow cold, and life die down in her, and all her beautiful body with its savage grace drop back into its casing of stone. She did not make use of the hand he held out to her as she stepped out of the carriage. They returned home in silence.

A few days later, about four o'clock in the evening, they were alone together. Braun had gone out. Since the day before the town had been shrouded in a pale greenish fog. The murmuring of the invisible river came up. The lights of the electric trams glared through the mist. The light of day was dead, stifled: time seemed to be wiped out: it was one of those hours when men lose all consciousness of reality, an hour which is outside the march of the ages. After the cutting wind of the preceding days, the moist air had suddenly grown warmer, too damp and too soft. The sky was filled with snow, and bent under the load.

They were alone together in the drawing-room, the cold cramped taste of which was the reflection of that of its mistress. They said nothing. He was reading. She was sewing. He got up and went to the window: he pressed his face against the panes, and stood so dreaming: he was stupefied and heavy with the dull light which was cast back from the darkling sky upon the livid earth: his thoughts were uneasy: he tried in vain to fix them: they escaped him. He was filled with a bitter agony: he felt that he was being engulfed: and in the depths of his being, from the chasm of the heap of ruins came a scorching wind in slow gusts. He turned his back on Anna: she could not see him, she was engrossed in her work; but a faint thrill passed through her body: she pricked herself several times with

her needle, but she did not feel it. They were both fascinated by the approaching danger.

He threw off his stupor and took a few strides across the room. The piano attracted him and made him fearful. He looked away from it. As he passed it his hand could not resist it, and touched a note. The sound quivered like a human voice. Anna trembled, and let her sewing fall. Christophe was already seated and playing. Without seeing her, he knew that Anna had got up, that she was coming towards him, that she was by his side. Before he knew what he was doing, he had begun the religious and passionate melody that she had sung the first time she had revealed herself to him: he improvised a fugue with variations on the theme. Without his saying a word to her, she began to sing. They lost all sense of their surroundings. The sacred frenzy of music had them in its clutches. . . .

O music, that openest the abysses of the soul! Thou dost destroy the normal balance of the mind. In ordinary life, ordinary souls are closed rooms: within, there droop the unused forces of life, the virtues and the vices to use which is hurtful to us: sage, practical wisdom, cowardly common sense, are the keepers of the keys of the room. They let us see only a few cupboards tidily and properly arranged. But music holds the magic wand which drives back every lock. The doors are opened. The demons of the heart appear. And, for the first time, the soul sees itself naked.—While the siren sings, while the bewitching voice trembles on the air, the tamer holds all the wild beasts in check with the power of the eye. The mighty mind and reason of a great musician fascinates all the passions that he sets loose. But when the music dies away, when the tamer is no longer there, then the passions he has summoned forth are left roaring in their tottering cage, and they seek their prey. . . .

The melody ended. Silence. . . . While she was singing she had laid her hand on Christophe's shoulder. They dared not move: and each felt the other trembling. Suddenly—in a flash—she bent down to him, he turned to her: their lips met: he drank her breath. . . .

She flung away from him and fled. He stayed, not stirring,

in the dark. Braun returned. They sat down to dinner. Christophe was incapable of thought. Anna seemed absent-minded: she was looking "elsewhere." Shortly after dinner she went to her room. Christophe found it impossible to stay alone with Braun, and went upstairs also.

About midnight the doctor was called from his bed to a patient. Christophe heard him go downstairs and out. It had been snowing ever since six o'clock. The houses and the streets were under a shroud. The air was as though it were padded with cotton-wool. Not a step, not a carriage could be heard outside. The town seemed dead. Christophe could not sleep. He had a feeling of terror which grew from minute to minute. He could not stir. He lay stiff in his bed, on his back, with his eyes wide open. A metallic light cast up from the white earth and roofs fell upon the walls of the room. . . . An imperceptible noise made him tremble. Only a man at a feverish tension could have heard it. Came a soft rustling on the floor of the passage. Christophe sat up in bed. The faint noise came nearer, stopped; a board creaked. There was some one behind the door: some one waiting. . . . Absolute stillness for a few seconds, perhaps for several minutes. . . . Christophe could not breathe, he broke out into a sweat. Outside flakes of snow brushed the window as with a wing. A hand fumbled with the door and opened it. There appeared a white form, and it came slowly forward: it halted a few yards away from him. Christophe could see nothing clearly: but he could hear her breathing: and he could hear his own heart thumping. She came nearer to him; once more she halted. Their faces were so near that their breath mingled. Their eyes sought each other vainly in the darkness. . . . She fell into his arms. In silence, without a word, they hugged each other close, frenziedly. . . .

An hour, two hours, a century later, the door of the house was opened. Anna broke from the embrace in which they were locked, slipped away, and left Christophe without a word, just as she had come. He heard her bare feet moving away, just skimming the floor in her swift flight. She regained her room, and there Braun found her in her bed, apparently asleep.

So she lay through the night, with eyes wide open, breathless, still, in her narrow bed near the sleeping Braun. How many nights had she passed like that!

Christophe could not sleep either. He was utterly in despair. He had always regarded the things of love, and especially marriage, with tragic seriousness. He hated the frivolity of those writers whose art uses adultery as a spicy flavoring. Adultery roused in him a feeling of repulsion which was a combination of his vulgar brutality and high morality. He had always felt a mixture of religious respect and physical disgust for a woman who belonged to another man. The doglike promiscuity in which some of the rich people in Europe lived appalled him. Adultery with the consent of the husband is a filthy thing: without the husband's knowledge it is a base deceit only worthy of a rascally servant hiding away to betray and befoul his master's honor. How often had he not piteously despised those whom he had known to be guilty of such cowardice! He had broken with some of his friends who had thus dishonored themselves in his eyes. . . . And now he too was sullied with the same shameful thing! The circumstances of the crime only made it the more odious. He had come to the house a sick, wretched man. His friend had welcomed him, helped him, given him comfort. His kindness had never flagged. Nothing had been too great a demand upon it. He owed him his very life. And in return he had robbed the man of his honor and his happiness, his poor little domestic happiness! He had basely betrayed him, and with whom? With a woman whom he did not know, did not understand, did not love. . . . Did he not love her? His every drop of blood rose up against him. Love is too faint a word to express the river of fire that rushed through him when he thought of her. It was not love, it was a thousand times a greater thing than love. . . . He was in a whirl all through the night. He got up, dipped his face in the icy water, gasped, and shuddered. The crisis came to a head in an attack of fever.

When he got up, aching all over, he thought that she, even more than he, must be overwhelmed with shame. He went to the window. The sun was shining down upon the dazzling snow. In the garden Anna was hanging out the clothes on a

line. She was engrossed in her work, and seemed to be in no wise put out. She had a dignity in her carriage and her gesture which was quite new to him, and made him, unconsciously, liken her to a moving statue.

They met again at lunch. Braun was away for the whole day. Christophe could not have borne meeting him. He wanted to speak to Anna. But they were not alone: the servant kept going and coming: they had to keep guard on themselves. In vain did Christophe try to catch Anna's eye. She did not look at him or at anything. There was no indication of inward ferment: and always in her smallest movement there was the unaccustomed assurance and nobility. After lunch he hoped they would have an opportunity of speaking: but the servant dallied over clearing away; and when they went into the next room she contrived to follow them: she always had something to fetch or to bring: she stayed bustling in the passage near the half-open door which Anna showed no hurry to shut: it looked as though she were spying on them. Anna sat by the window with her everlasting sewing. Christophe leaned back in an arm-chair with his back to the light, and a book on his knee which he did not attempt to read. Anna could only see his profile, and she noticed the torment in his face as he looked at the wall: and she gave a cruel smile. From the roof of the house and the tree in the garden the melting snow trickled down into the gravel with a thin tinkling noise. Some distance away was the laughter of children chasing each other in the street and snow-balling. Anna seemed to be half-asleep. The silence was torture to Christophe: it hurt him so that he could have cried out.

At last the servant went downstairs and left the house. Christophe got up, turned to Anna, and was about to say:

"Anna! Anna! what have we done?"

Anna looked at him: her eyes, which had been obstinately lowered, had just opened: they rested on Christophe, and devoured him hotly, hungrily. Christophe felt his own eyes burn under the impact, and he reeled; everything that he wanted to say was brushed aside. They came together, and once more they were locked in an embrace. . . .

The shades of the evening were falling. Their blood was still in turmoil. She was lying down, with her dress torn, her arms outstretched. He had buried his face in the pillow, and was groaning aloud. She turned towards him and raised his head, and caressed his eyes and his lips with her fingers: she brought her face close to his, and she stared into his eyes. Her eyes were deep, deep as a lake, and they smiled at each other in utter indifference to pain. They lost consciousness. He was silent. Mighty waves of feeling thrilled through them. . . .

That night, when he was alone in his room, Christophe thought of killing himself.

Next day, as soon as he was up, he went to Anna. Now it was he whose eyes avoided hers. As soon as he met their gaze all that he had to say was banished from his mind. However, he made an effort, and began to speak of the cowardice of what they had done. Hardly had she understood than she roughly stopped his lips with her hand. She flung away from him with a scowl, and her lips pressed together, and an evil expression upon her face. He went on. She flung the work she was holding down on the ground, opened the door, and tried to go out. He caught her hands, closed the door, and said bitterly that she was very lucky to be able to banish from her mind all idea of the evil they had done. She struggled like an animal caught in a trap, and cried angrily:

"Stop! . . . You coward, can't you see how I am suffering? . . . I won't let you speak! Let me go!"

Her face was drawn, her expression was full of hate and fear, like a beast that has been hurt: her eyes would have killed him, if they could.—He let her go. She ran to the opposite corner of the room to take shelter. He had no desire to pursue her. His heart was aching with bitterness and terror. Braun came in. He looked at them, and they stood stockishly there. Nothing existed for them outside their own suffering.

Christophe went out. Braun and Anna sat down to their meal. In the middle of dinner Braun suddenly got up to open the window. Anna had fainted.

Christophe left the town for a fortnight on the pretext of having been called away. For a whole week Anna remained shut up in her room except for meal-times. She slipped back into consciousness of herself, into her old habits, the old life from which she had thought she had broken away, from which we never break away. In vain did she close her eyes to what she had done. Every day anxiety made further inroads into her heart, and finally took possession of it. On the following Sunday she refused once more to go to church. But the Sunday after that she went, and never omitted it again. She was conquered, but not submissive. God was the enemy,—an enemy from whose power she could not free herself. She went to Him with the sullen anger of a slave who is forced into obedience. During service her face showed nothing but cold hostility: but in the depths of her soul the whole of her religious life was a fierce, dumbly exasperated struggle against the Master whose reproaches persecuted her. She pretended not to hear. She *had* to hear: and bitterly, savagely, with clenched teeth, hard eyes, and a deep frowning furrow in her forehead, she would argue with God. She thought of Christophe with hatred. She could not forgive him for having delivered her for one moment from the prison of her soul, only to let her fall back into it again, to be the prey of its tormentors. She could not sleep; day and night she went over and over the same torturing thoughts: she did not complain: she went on obstinately doing her household work and all her other duties, and throughout maintaining the unyielding and obstinate character of her will in her daily life, the various tasks of which she fulfilled with the regularity of a machine. She grew thin, and seemed to be a prey to some internal malady. Braun questioned her fondly and anxiously: he wanted to sound her. She repulsed him angrily. The greater her remorse grew for what she had done to him, the more harshly she spoke to him.

Christophe had determined not to return. He wore himself out. He took long runs and violent exercise, rowed, walked, climbed mountains. Nothing was able to quench the fire in him.

He was more the victim of passion than an ordinary man. It is the necessity of the nature of men of genius. Even the

most chaste, like Beethoven and Bürchner, must always be in love: every human capacity is raised to a higher degree in them, and as, in them, every human capacity is seized on by their imagination, their minds are a prey to a continual succession of passions. Most often they are only transitory fires: one destroys another, and all are absorbed by the great blaze of the creative spirit. But if the heat of the furnace ceases to fill the soul, then the soul is left defenseless against the passions without which it cannot live: it must have passion, it creates passion: and the passions will devour the soul . . . —and then, besides the bitter desire that harrows the flesh, there is the need of tenderness which drives a man who is weary and disillusioned of life into the mothering arms of the comforter, woman. A great man is more of a child than a lesser man: more than any other, he needs to confide in a woman, to lay his head in the soft hands of the beloved, in the folds of the lap of her gown.

But Christophe could not understand. . . . He did not believe in the inevitability of passion—the idiotic cult of the romantics. He believed that a man can and must fight with all the force of his will. . . . His will! Where was it? Not a trace of it was left. He was possessed. He was stung by the barbs of memory, day and night. The scent of Anna's body was with him everywhere. He was like a dismantled hulk, rolling rudderless, at the mercy of the winds. In vain did he try to escape, he strove mightily, wore himself out in the attempt: he always found himself brought back to the same place, and he shouted to the wind:

"Break me, break me, then! What do you want of me?"

Feverishly he probed into himself. Why, why this woman? . . . Why did he love her? It was not for her qualities of heart or mind. There were any number of better and more intelligent women. It was not for her body. He had had other mistresses more acceptable to his senses. What was it? . . . —"We love because we love."—Yes, but there is a reason, even if it be beyond ordinary human reason. Madness? That means nothing. Why this madness?

Because there is a hidden soul, blind forces, demons, which every one of us bears imprisoned in himself. Our every effort,

since the first existence of humanity, has been directed towards the building up against this inward sea of the dykes of our reason and our religions. But a storm arises (and the richest souls are the most subject to storms), the dykes are broken, the demons have free play, they find themselves in the presence of other souls uptorn by similar powers. . . . They hurl themselves at each other. Hatred or love? A frenzy of mutual destruction?—Passion is the soul of prey.

The sea has burst its bounds. Who shall turn it back into its bed? Then must a man appeal to a mightier than himself. To Neptune, the God of the tides.

After a fortnight of vain efforts to escape. Christophe returned to Anna. He could not live away from her. He was stifled.

And yet he went on struggling. On the evening of his return, they found excuses for not meeting and not dining together: at night they locked their doors in fear and dread.—But love was stronger than they. In the middle of the night she came creeping barefooted, and knocked at his door She wept silently. He felt the tears coursing down her cheeks. She tried to control herself, but her anguish was too much for her and she sobbed. Under the frightful burden of her grief Christophe forgot his own: he tried to calm her and gave her tender, comfortable words. She moaned:

"I am so unhappy. I wish I were dead. . . ."

Her plaint pierced his heart. He tried to kiss her. She repulsed him:

"I hate you! . . . Why did you ever come?"

She wrenched herself away from him. She turned her back on him and shook with rage and grief. She hated him mortally. Christophe lay still, appalled. In the silence Anna heard his choking breathing: she turned suddenly and flung her arms round his neck:

"Poor Christophe!" she said. "I have made you suffer. . . ."

For the first time he heard pity in her voice.

"Forgive me," she said.

He said:

"We must forgive each other."

She raised herself as though she found it hard to breathe. She sat there, with bowed back, overwhelmed, and said:

"I am ruined. . . . It is God's will. He has betrayed me. . . . What can I do against Him?"

She stayed for a long time like that, then lay down again and did not stir. A faint light proclaimed the dawn. In the half-light he saw her sorrowful face so near his. He murmured:

"The day."

She made no movement.

He said:

"So be it. What does it matter?"

She opened her eyes and left him with an expression of utter weariness. She sat for a moment looking down at the floor. In a dull, colorless voice she said:

"I thought of killing him last night."

He gave a start of terror:

"Anna!" he said.

She was staring gloomily at the window.

"Anna!" he said again. "In God's name! . . . Not him! . . . He is the best of us! . . ."

She echoed:

"Not him. Very well."

They looked at each other.

They had known it for a long time. They had known where the only way out lay. They could not bear to live a lie. And they had never even considered the possibility of eloping together. They knew perfectly well that that would not solve the problem: for the bitterest suffering came not from the external obstacles that held them apart, but in themselves, in their different souls. It was as impossible for them to live together as to live apart. They were driven into a corner.

From that moment on they never touched each other: the shadow of death was upon them: they were sacred to each other.

But they put off appointing a time for their decision. They kept on saying: "To-morrow, to-morrow. . . ." And they turned their eyes away from their to-morrow. Christophe's mighty soul had wild spasms of revolt: he would not consent to his defeat: he despised suicide, and he could not resign himself to such a pitiful and abrupt conclusion of his splendid life. As

for Anna, how could she, unless she were forced, accept the idea of a death which must lead to eternal death? But ruthless necessity was at their heels, and the circle was slowly narrowing about them.

That morning, for the first time since the betrayal, Christophe was left alone with Braun. Until then he had succeeded in avoiding him. He found it intolerable to be with him. He had to make an excuse to avoid eating at the same table: the food stuck in his throat. To shake the man's hand, to eat his bread, to give the kiss of Judas! . . . Most odious for him to think of was not the contempt he had for himself so much as the agony of suffering that Braun must endure if he should come to know. . . . The idea of it crucified him. He knew only too well that poor Braun would never avenge himself, that perhaps he would not even have the strength to hate them: but what an utter wreck of all his life! . . . How would he regard him! Christophe felt that he could not face the reproach in his eyes.—And it was inevitable that sooner or later Braun would be warned. Did he not already suspect something? Seeing him again after his fortnight's absence Christophe was struck by the change in him: Braun was not the same man. His gaiety had disappeared, or there was something forced in it. At meals he would stealthily glance at Anna, who talked not at all, ate not at all, and seemed to be burning away like the oil in a lamp. With timid, touching kindness he tried to look after her: she rejected his attentions harshly: then he bent his head over his plate and relapsed into silence. Anna could bear it no longer, and flung her napkin on the table in the middle of the meal and left the room. The two men finished their dinner in silence, or pretended to do so, for they ate nothing: they dared not raise their eyes. When they had finished, Christophe was on the point of going when Braun suddenly clasped his arm with both hands and said:

"Christophe!"

Christophe looked at him uneasily.

"Christophe," said Braun again—(his voice was shaking),—"do you know what's the matter with her?"

Christophe stood transfixed: for a moment or two he could

find nothing to say. Braun stood looking at him timidly: very quickly he begged his pardon:

"You see a good deal of her, she trusts you. . . ."

Christophe was very near taking Braun's hands and kissing them and begging his forgiveness. Braun saw Christophe's downcast expression, and, at once, he was terrified, and refused to see: he cast him a beseeching look and stammered hurriedly and gasped:

"No, no. You know nothing? Nothing?"

Christophe was overwhelmed and said:

"No."

Oh! the bitterness of not being able to lay bare his offense, to humble himself, since to do so would be to break the heart of the man he had wronged! Oh! the bitterness of being unable to tell the truth, when he could see in the eyes of the man asking him for it, that he could not, would not know the truth! . . .

"Thanks, thank you. I thank you . . ." said Braun.

He stayed with his hands plucking at Christophe's sleeve as though there was something else he wished to ask, and yet dared not, avoiding his eyes. Then he let go, sighed, and went away.

Christophe was appalled by this new lie. He hastened to Anna. Stammering in his excitement, he told her what had happened. Anna listened gloomily and said:

"Oh, well. He knows. What does it matter?"

"How can you talk like that?" cried Christophe. "It is horrible! I will not have him suffer, whatever it may cost us, whatever it may cost."

Anna grew angry.

"And what if he does suffer? Don't I have to suffer? Let him suffer too!"

They said bitter things to each other. He accused her of loving only herself. She reproached him with thinking more of her husband than of herself.

But a moment later, when he told her that he could not go on living like that, and that he would go and tell the whole story to Braun, then she cried out on him for his selfishness, declaring that she did not care a bit about Christophe's conscience, but was quite determined that Braun should never know.

In spite of her hard words she was thinking as much of Braun

as of Christophe. Though she had no real affection for her husband she was fond of him. She had a religious respect for social ties and the duties they involve. Perhaps she did not think that it was the duty of a wife to be kind and to love her husband: but she did think that she was compelled scrupulously to fulfil her household duties and to remain faithful. It seemed to her ignoble to fail in that object as she herself had done.

And even more surely than Christophe she knew that Braun must know everything very soon. It was something to her credit that she concealed the fact from Christophe, either because she did not wish to add to his troubles or more probably because of her pride.

Secluded though the Braun household was, secret though the tragedy might remain that was being enacted there, some hint of it had trickled away to the outer world.

In that town it was impossible for any one to flatter himself that the facts of his life were hidden. This was strangely true. No one ever looked at anybody in the streets: the doors and shutters of the houses were closed. But there were mirrors fastened in the corners of the windows: and as one passed the houses one could hear the faint creaking of the venetian shutters being pushed open and shut again. Nobody took any notice of anybody else: everything and everybody were apparently ignored: but it was not long before one perceived that not a single word, not a single gesture had been unobserved: whatever one did, whatever one said, whatever one saw, whatever one ate was known at once: even what one thought was known, or, at least, everybody pretended to know. One was surrounded by a universal, mysterious watchfulness. Servants, tradespeople, relations, friends, people who were neither friends nor enemies, passing strangers, all by tacit agreement shared in this instinctive espionage, the scattered elements of which were gathered to a head no one knew how. Not only were one's actions observed, but they probed into one's inmost heart. In that town no man had the right to keep the secrets of his conscience, and everybody had the right to rummage amongst his intimate thoughts, and, if they were offensive to public opinion, to call him to account. The invisible despotism of the collective mind dominated the

individual: all his life he remained like a child in a state of tutelage: he could call nothing his own: he belonged to the town.

It was enough for Anna to have stayed away from church two Sundays running to arouse suspicion. As a rule no one seemed to notice her presence at service: she lived outside the life of the place, and the town seemed to have forgotten her existence.—On the evening of the first Sunday when she had stayed away her absence was known to everybody and docketed in their memory. On the following Sunday not one of the pious people following the blessed words in their Bibles or on the minister's lips seemed to be distracted from their solemn attention: not one of them had failed to notice as they entered, and to verify as they left, the fact that Anna's place was empty. Next day Anna began to receive visits from women she had not seen for many months: they came on various pretexts, some fearing that she was ill, others assuming a new interest in her affairs, her husband, her house: some of them showed a singularly intimate knowledge of the doings of her household: not one of them—(with clumsy ingenuity)—made any allusion to her absence from church on two Sundays running. Anna said that she was unwell and declared that she was very busy. Her visitors listened attentively and applauded her: Anna knew that they did not believe a word she said. Their eyes wandered round the room, prying, taking notes, docketing. They did not for a moment drop their cold affability or their noisy affected chatter: but their eyes revealed the indiscreet curiosity which was devouring them. Two or three with exaggerated indifference inquired after M. Krafft.

A few days later—(during Christophe's absence),—the minister came himself. He was a handsome, good-natured creature, splendidly healthy, affable, with that imperturbable tranquillity which comes to a man from the consciousness of being in sole possession of the truth, the whole truth. He inquired anxiously after the health of the members of his flock, politely and absently listened to the excuses she gave him, which he had not asked for, accepted a cup of tea, made a mild joke or two, expressed his opinion on the subject of drink that the wine referred to in the Bible was not alcoholic liquor, produced several

quotations, told a story, and, as he was leaving, made a dark allusion to the danger of bad company, to certain excursions in the country, to the spirit of impiety, to the impurity of dancing, and the filthy lusts of the flesh. He seemed to be addressing his remarks to the age in general and not to Anna. He stopped for a moment, coughed, got up, bade Anna give his respectful compliments to M. Braun, made a joke in Latin, bowed, and took his leave.—Anna was left frozen by his allusion. Was it an allusion? How could he have known about her excursion with Christophe? They had not met a soul of their acquaintance that day. But was not everything known in the town? The musician with the remarkable face and the young woman in black who had danced at the inn had attracted much attention: their descriptions had been spread abroad; and, as the story was bandied from mouth to mouth, it had reached the town where the watchful malice of the gossips had not failed to recognize Anna. No doubt it amounted as yet to no more than a suspicion, but it was singularly attractive, and it was augmented by information supplied by Anna's maid. Public curiosity had been a-tip-toe, waiting for them to compromise each other, spying on them with a thousand invisible eyes. The silent crafty people of the town were creeping close upon them, like a cat lying in wait for a mouse.

In spite of the danger Anna would in all probability not have given in: perhaps her consciousness of such cowardly hostility would have driven her to some desperate act of provocation if she had not herself been possessed by the Pharisaic spirit of the society which was so antagonistic to her. Her education had subjugated her nature. It was in vain that she condemned the tyranny and meanness of public opinion: she respected it: she subscribed to its decrees even when they were directed against herself: if they had come into conflict with her conscience, she would have sacrificed her conscience. She despised the town: but she could not have borne the town to despise herself.

Now the time was coming when the public scandal would be afforded an opportunity of discharging itself. The carnival was coming on.

In that city, the carnival had preserved up to the time of the

events narrated in this history—(it has changed since then)—a character of archaic license and roughness. Faithfully in accordance with its origin, by which it had been a relaxation for the profligacy of the human mind subjugated, wilfully or involuntarily, by reason, it nowhere reached such a pitch of audacity as in the periods and countries in which custom and law, the guardians of reason, weighed most heavily upon the people. The town in which Anna lived was therefore one of its most chosen regions. The more moral stringency paralyzed action and gagged speech, the bolder did action become and speech the more untrammeled during those few days. Everything that was secreted away in the lower depths of the soul, jealousy, secret hate, lewd curiosity, the malicious instincts inherent in the social animal, would burst forth with all the vehemence and joy of revenge. Every man had the right to go out into the streets, and, prudently masked, to nail to the pillory, in full view of the public gaze, the object of his detestation, to lay before all and sundry all that he had found out by a year of patient industry, his whole hoard of scandalous secrets gathered drop by drop. One man would display them on the cars. Another would carry a transparent lantern on which were pasted in writings and drawings the secret history of the town. Another would go so far as to wear a mask in imitation of his enemy, made so easily recognizable that the very gutter-snipes would point him out by name. Slanderous newspapers would appear during the three days. Even the very best people would craftily take part in the game of *Pasquino*. No control was exercised except over political allusions,—such coarse liberty of speech having on more than one occasion produced fierce conflict between the authorities of the town and the representatives of foreign countries. But there was nothing to protect the citizens against the citizens, and this cloud of public insult, constantly hanging over their heads, did not a little help to maintain the apparently impeccable morality on which the town prided itself.

Anna felt the weight of that dread—which was quite unjustified. She had very little reason to be afraid. She occupied too small a place in the opinion of the town for any one to

think of attacking her. But in the absolute isolation in which of her own choice she lived, in her state of exhaustion and nervous excitement brought on by several weeks of sleepless nights and moral suffering, her imagination was apt to welcome the most unreasoning terrors. She exaggerated the animosity of those who did not like her. She told herself that suspicion was on her track: the veriest trifle was enough to ruin her: and there was nothing to assure her that it was not already an accomplished fact. It would mean insult, pitiless exposure, her heart laid bare to the mockery of the passers-by: dishonor so cruel that Anna was near dying of shame at the very thought of it. She called to mind how, a few years before, a girl, who had been the victim of such persecution, had had to fly the country with her family. . . . And she could do nothing, nothing to defend herself, nothing to prevent it, nothing even to find out if it was going to happen. The suspense was even more maddening than the certainty. Anna looked desperately about her like an animal at bay. In her own house she knew that she was hemmed in.

Anna's servant was a woman of over forty: her name was Bäbi: she was tall and strong: her face was narrow and bony round her brow and temples, wide and long in the lower part, fleshy under the jaw, roughly pear-shaped: she had a perpetual smile and eyes that pierced like gimlets, sunken, as though they had been sucked in, beneath red eyelids with colorless lashes. She never put off her expression of coquettish gaiety: she was always delighted with her superiors, always of their opinion, worrying about their health with tender interest: smiling when they gave her orders: smiling when they scolded her. Braun believed that she was unshakably devoted. Her gushing manner was strongly in contrast with Anna's coldness. However, she was like her in many things: like her she spoke little and dressed in a severe neat style: like her she was very pious, and went to service with her, scrupulously fulfilling all her religious duties and nicely attending to her household tasks: she was clean, methodical, and her morals and her kitchen were beyond reproach. In a word she was an exemplary servant and the perfect type of domestic foe. Anna's feminine instinct was hardly ever wrong

in her divination of the secret thoughts of women, and she had no illusions about her. They detested each other, knew it, and never let it appear.

On the night of Christophe's return, when Anna, torn by her desire and her emotion, went to him once more in spite of her resolve never to see him again, she walked stealthily, groping along the wall in the darkness: just as she reached Christophe's door, instead of the ordinary cold smooth polished floor, she felt a warm dust softly crunching under her bare feet. She stooped, touched it with her hands, and understood: a thin layer of ashes had been spread for the space of a few yards across the passage. Without knowing it Bäbi had happed on the old device employed in the days of the old Breton songs by Frocin the dwarf to catch Tristan on his way to Yseult: so true it is that a limited number of types, good and bad, serve for all ages. A remarkable piece of evidence in favor of the wise economy of the universe!—Anna did not hesitate; she did not stop or turn, but went on in a sort of contemptuous bravado: she went to Christophe, told him nothing, in spite of her uneasiness: but when she returned she took the stove brush and carefully effaced every trace of her footsteps in the ashes, after she had crossed over them.—When Anna and Bäbi met next day it was with the usual coldness and the accustomed smile.

Bäbi used sometimes to receive a visit from a relation who was a little older than herself: he fulfilled the function of beadle of the church: during *Gottesdienst* (Divine service) he used to stand sentinel at the church door, wearing a white armlet with black stripes and a silver tassel, leaning on a cane with a curved handle. By trade he was an undertaker. His name was Sami Witschi. He was very tall and thin, with a slight stoop, and he had the clean-shaven solemn face of an old peasant. He was very pious and knew better than any one all the tittle-tattle of the parish. Bäbi and Sami were thinking of getting married: they appreciated each other's serious qualities, and solid faith and malice. But they were in no hurry to make up their minds: they prudently took stock of each other.—Latterly Sami's visits had become more frequent. He would come in unawares. Every time Anna went near the kitchen and looked through the door, she would see Sami sitting near the fire, and Bäbi a few yards

away, sewing. However much they talked, it was impossible to hear a sound. She could see Bäbi's beaming face and her lips moving: Sami's wide hard mouth would stretch in a grin without opening: not a sound would come up from his throat: the house seemed to be lost in silence. Whenever Anna entered the kitchen, Sami would rise respectfully and remain standing, without a word, until she had gone out again. Whenever Bäbi heard the door open, she would ostentatiously break off in the middle of a commonplace remark, and turn to Anna with an obsequious smile and wait for her orders. Anna would think they were talking about her: but she despised them too much to play the eavesdropper.

The day after Anna had dodged the ingenious trap of the ashes, as she entered the kitchen, the first thing she saw in Sami's hand was the little broom she had used the night before to wipe out the marks of her bare feet. She had taken it out of Christophe's room, and that very minute, she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to take it back again; she had left it in her own room, where Bäbi's sharp eyes had seen it at once. The two gossips had immediately put two and two together. Anna did not flinch. Bäbi followed her mistress's eyes, gave an exaggerated smile, and explained:

"The broom was broken: I gave it to Sami to mend."

Anna did not take the trouble to point out the gross falsehood of the excuse: she did not seem even to hear it: she looked at Bäbi's work, made a few remarks, and went out again impassively. But when the door was closed she lost all her pride: she could not help hiding behind the corner of the passage and listening—(she was humiliated to the very depths of her being at having to stoop to such means: but fear mastered her). —She heard a dry chuckle of laughter. Then whispering, so low that she could not make out what was said. But in her desperation Anna thought she heard: her terror breathed into her ears the words she was afraid of hearing: she imagined that they were speaking of the coming masquerades and a charivari. There was no doubt: they would try to introduce the episode of the ashes. Probably she was wrong: but in her state of morbid excitement, having for a whole fortnight been haunted by the fixed idea of public insult, she did not stop to consider

whether the uncertain could be possible: she regarded it as certain.

From that time on her mind was made up.

On the evening of the same day—(it was the Wednesday preceding the carnival)—Braun was called away to a consultation twenty miles out of the town: he would not return until the next morning. Anna did not come down to dinner and stayed in her room. She had chosen that night to carry out the tacit pledge she had made with herself. But she had decided to carry it out alone, and to say nothing to Christophe. She despised him. She thought:

"He promised. But he is a man, he is an egoist and a liar. He has his art. He will soon forget."

And then perhaps there was in her passionate heart that seemed so inaccessible to kindness, room for a feeling of pity for her companion. But she was too harsh and too passionate to admit it to herself.

Bäbi told Christophe that her mistress had bade her to make her excuses as she was not very well and wished to rest. Christophe dined alone under Bäbi's supervision, and she bored him with her chatter, tried to make him talk, and protested such an extraordinary devotion to Anna, that, in spite of his readiness to believe in the good faith of men, Christophe became suspicious. He was counting on having a decisive interview with Anna that night. He could no more postpone matters than she. He had not forgotten the pledge they had given each other at the dawn of that sad day. He was ready to keep it if Anna demanded it of him. But he saw the absurdity of their dying together, how it would not solve the problem, and how the sorrow of it and the scandal must fall upon Braun's shoulders. He was inclined to think that the best thing to do was to tear themselves apart and for him to try once more to go right away, —to see at least if he were strong enough to stay away from her: he doubted it after the vain attempt he had made before: but he thought that, in case he could not bear it, he would still have time to turn to the last resort, alone, without anybody knowing.

He hoped that after supper he would be able to escape for

a moment to go up to Anna's room. But Bäbi dogged him. As a rule she used to finish her work early: but that night she seemed never to have done with scrubbing her kitchen: and when Christophe thought he was rid of her, she took it into her head to tidy a cupboard in the passage leading to Anna's room. Christophe found her standing on a stool, and he saw that she had no intention of moving all evening. He felt a furious desire to knock her over with her piles of plates: but he restrained himself and asked her to go and see how her mistress was and if he could say good-night to her. Bäbi went, returned, and said, as she watched him with a malicious joy, that Madame was better and was asleep and did not want anybody to disturb her. Christophe tried irritably and nervously to read, but could not, and went up to his room. Bäbi watched his light until it was put out, and then went upstairs to her room, resolving to keep watch: she carefully left her door open so that she could hear every sound in the house. Unfortunately for her, she could not go to bed without at once falling asleep and sleeping so soundly that not thunder, not even her own curiosity, could wake her up before daybreak. Her sound sleep was no secret. The echo of it resounded through the house even to the lower floor.

As soon as Christophe heard the familiar noise he went to Anna's room. It was imperative that he should speak to her. He was profoundly uneasy. He reached her door, turned the handle: the door was locked. He knocked lightly: no reply. He placed his lips to the keyhole and begged her in a whisper, then more loudly, to open: not a movement, not a sound. Although he told himself that Anna was asleep, he was in agonies. And as, in a vain attempt to hear, he laid his cheek against the door, a smell came to his nostrils which seemed to be issuing from the room: he bent down and recognized it: it was the smell of gas. His blood froze. He shook the door, never thinking that he might wake Bäbi: the door did not give. . . . He understood: in her dressing-room, which led out of her room, Anna had a little gas-stove: she had turned it on. He must break open the door: but in his anxiety Christophe kept his senses enough to remember that at all costs Bäbi must not hear. He leaned against one of the leaves of the door and gave

an enormous shove as quietly as he could. The solid, well-fitting door creaked on its hinges, but did not yield. There was another door which led from Anna's room to Braun's dressing-room. He ran to it. That too was locked: but the lock was outside. He started to tug it off. It was not easy. He had to remove the four big screws which were buried deep in the wood. He had only his knife and he could not see: for he dared not light a candle; it would have meant blowing the whole place up. Fumblingly he managed to fit his knife into the head of a screw, then another, breaking the blades and cutting himself; the screws seemed to be interminably long, and he thought he would never be able to get them out: and, at the same time, in the feverish haste which was making his body break out into a cold sweat, there came to his mind a memory of his childhood: he saw himself, a boy of ten, shut up in a dark room as a punishment: he had taken off the lock and run out of the house. . . . The last screw came out. The lock gave with a crackling noise like the sawing of wood. Christophe plunged into the room, rushed to the window, and opened it. A flood of cold air swept in. Christophe bumped into the furniture in the dark and came to the bed, groped with his hands, and came on Anna's body, tremblingly felt her legs lying still under the clothes, and moved his hands up to her waist: Anna was sitting up in bed, trembling. She had not had time to feel the first effects of asphyxiation: the room was high: the air came through the chinks in the windows and the doors. Christophe caught her in his arms. She broke away from him angrily, crying:

"Go away! . . . Ah! What have you done?"

She raised her hands to strike him: but she was worn out with emotion: she fell back on her pillow and sobbed:

"Oh! Oh! We've to go through it all over again!"

Christophe took her hands in his, kissed her, scolded her, spoke to her tenderly and roughly:

"You were going to die, to die, alone, without me!"

"Oh! You!" she said bitterly.

Her tone was as much as to say:

"You want to live."

He spoke harshly to her and tried to break down her will.

"You are mad!" he said. "You might have blown the house to pieces!"

"I wanted to," she said angrily.

He tried to play on her religious fears: that was the right note. As soon as he touched on it she began to scream and to beg him to stop. He went on pitilessly, thinking that it was the only means of bringing her back to the desire to live. She said nothing more, but lay sobbing convulsively. When he had done, she said in a tone of intense hatred:

"Are you satisfied now? You've done your work well. You've brought me to despair. And now, what am I to do?"

"Live," he said.

"Live!" she cried. "You don't know how impossible it is! You know nothing! You know nothing!"

He asked:

"What is it?"

She shrugged her shoulders:

"Listen."

In a few brief disconnected sentences she told him all that she had concealed from him: Bäbi's spying on her, the ashes, the scene with Sami, the carnival, the public insult that was before her. As she told her story she was unable to distinguish between the figments of her fear and what she had any reason to fear. He listened in utter consternation, and was no more capable than she of discerning between the real and the imaginary in her story. Nothing had ever been farther from his mind than to suspect how they were being dogged. He tried to understand: he could find nothing to say: against such enemies he was disarmed. Only he was conscious of a blind fury, a desire to strike and to destroy. He said:

"Why didn't you dismiss Bäbi?"

She did not deign to reply. Bäbi dismissed would have been even more venomous than Bäbi tolerated: and Christophe saw the idiocy of his question. His thoughts were in a whirl: he was trying to discover a way out, some immediate action upon which to engage. He clenched his fists and cried:

"I'll kill them?"

"Who?" she said, despising him for his futile words.

He lost all power of thought or action. He felt that he

was lost in such a network of obscure treachery, in which it was impossible to clutch at anything since all were parties to it. He writhed.

"Cowards!" he cried, in sheer despair.

He slipped down on to his knees and buried his face against Anna.—They were silent for a little. She felt a mixture of contempt and pity for the man who could defend neither himself nor her. He felt Anna's limbs trembling with cold against his cheek. The window had been left open, and outside it was freezing: they could see the icy stars shivering in the sky that was smooth and gleaming as a mirror.

When she had fully tasted the bitter joy of seeing him as broken as herself, she said in a hard, weary voice:

"Light the candle."

He did so. Anna's teeth were chattering, she was sitting huddled up, with her arms tight folded across her chest and her knees up to her chin. He closed the window. Then he sat on the bed. He laid his hands on Anna's feet: they were cold as ice, and he warmed them with his hands and lips. She was softened.

"Christophe!" she said.

Her eyes were pitiful to see.

"Anna!" said he.

"What are we going to do?"

He looked at her and replied:

"Die."

She gave a cry of joy.

"Oh! You will? You will? . . . I shall not be alone!"

She kissed him.

"Did you think I was going to let you?"

She replied in a whisper:

"Yes."

A few moments later he questioned her with his eyes. She understood.

"In the bureau," she said. "On the right. The bottom drawer."

He went and looked. At the back of the drawer he found a revolver. Braun had bought it as a student. He had never made use of it. In an open box Christophe found some cart-

ridges. He took them to the bed. Anna looked at them, and at once turned her eyes away to the wall.

Christophe waited, and then asked:

"You don't want to . . .?"

Anna turned abruptly:

"I will. . . . Quick!"

She thought:

"Nothing can save me now from the everlasting pit. A little more or less, it will be just the same."

Christophe awkwardly loaded the revolver.

"Anna," he said, and his voice trembled. "One of us will see the other die."

She wrenched the pistol out of his hands and said selfishly:

"I shall be the first."

They looked at each other once more. . . . Alas! At the very moment when they were to die for each other they felt so far apart! . . . Each was thinking in terror:

"What am I doing? What am I doing?"

And each was reading the other's eyes. The absurdity of the thing was what struck Christophe most. All his life gone for nothing: vain his struggles: vain his suffering: vain his hopes: all botched, flung to the winds: one foolish act was to wipe all away. . . . In his normal state he would have wrenched the revolver away from Anna and flung it out of the window and cried:

"No, no! I will not."

But eight months of suffering, of doubt and torturing grief, and on top of that the whirlwind of their crazy passion, had wasted his strength and broken his will: he felt that he could do nothing now, that he was no longer master of himself. . . . Ah! what did it matter, after all?

Anna, feeling certain that she was doomed to everlasting death, stretched every nerve to catch and hold the last minute of her life: Christophe's sorrowful face lit by the flickering candle, the shadows on the wall, a footstep in the street, the cold contact of the steel in her hand. . . . She clung to these sensations, as a shipwrecked man clings to the spar that sinks beneath his weight. Afterwards all was terror. Why not prolong the time of waiting? But she said to herself:

"I must. . . ."

She said good-by to Christophe, with no tenderness, with the haste of a hurried traveler fearful of losing the train: she bared her bosom, felt for her heart, and laid the mouth of the revolver against it. Christophe hid his face. Just as she was about to fire she laid her left hand on Christophe's. It was the gesture of a child dreading to walk in the darkness. . . .

Then a few frightful seconds passed. . . . Anna did not fire. Christophe wanted to raise his head, to take her in his arms: and he was afraid that his very movement might bring her to the point of firing. He heard nothing more: he lost consciousness. . . . A groan from Anna pierced his heart. He got up. He saw Anna with her face distorted in terror. The revolver had fallen down on to the bed. She kept on saying plaintively:

"Christophe! . . . It has missed fire! . . ."

He took the pistol: it had lain long forgotten and had grown rusty: but the trigger was in working order. Perhaps the cartridges had gone bad with exposure to the air.—Anna held out her hand for the revolver.

"Enough! Enough!" he implored her.

She commanded him:

"The cartridges!"

He gave them to her. She examined them, took one, loaded the pistol, trembling, put the pistol to her breast, and fired.—Once more it missed fire.

Anna flung the revolver out into the room.

"Oh! It is horrible, horrible!" she cried. "*He* will not let me die!"

She writhed and sobbed: she was like a madwoman. He tried to touch her: she beat him off, screaming. Finally she had a nervous attack. Christophe stayed with her until morning. At last she was pacified: but she lay still and breathless, with her eyes closed and the livid skin stretched tight over the bones of her forehead and cheeks: she looked like one dead.

Christophe repaired the disorder of her bed, picked up the revolver, fastened on the lock he had wrenched away, tidied up

the whole room, and went away: for it was seven o'clock and Bäbi might come at any moment.

When Braun returned next morning he found Anna in the same prostrate condition. He saw that something extraordinary had happened: but he could glean nothing either from Bäbi or Christophe. All day long Anna did not stir: she did not open her eyes: her pulse was so weak that he could hardly feel it: every now and then it would stop, and, for a moment, Braun would be in a state of agony, thinking that her heart had stopped. His affection made him doubt his own knowledge: he ran and fetched a colleague. The two men examined Anna and could not make up their minds whether it was the beginning of a fever, or a case of nervous hysteria: they had to keep the patient under observation. Braun never left Anna's bedside. He refused to eat. Towards evening Anna's pulse gave no signs of fever, but was extremely weak. Braun tried to force a few spoonfuls of milk between her lips: she brought it back at once. Her body lay limp in her husband's arms like a broken doll. Braun spent the night with her, getting up every moment to listen to her breathing. Bäbi, who was hardly at all put out by Anna's illness, played the devoted servant and refused to go to bed and sat up with Braun.

On the Friday Anna opened her eyes. Braun spoke to her: she took no notice of him. She lay quite still with her eyes staring at a mark on the wall. About midday Braun saw great tears trickling down her thin cheeks: he dried them gently: one by one the tears went on trickling down. Once more Braun tried to make her take some food. She took it passively. In the evening she began to talk: loose snatches of sentences. She talked about the Rhine: she had tried to drown herself, but there was not enough water. In her dreams she persisted in attempting suicide, imagining all sorts of strange forms of death; always death was at the back of her thoughts. Sometimes she was arguing with some one, and then her face would take on an expression of fear and anger: she addressed herself to God, and tried obstinately to prove that it was all His fault. Or the flame of desire would kindle in her eyes, and she would say shameless things which it seemed impossible that she should

know. Once she saw Bäbi, and gave precise orders for the morrow's washing. At night she dozed. Suddenly she got up: Braun ran to her. She looked at him strangely, and babbled impatient formless words. He asked her:

"My dear Anna, what do you want?"

She said harshly:

"Go and bring him."

"Who?" he asked.

She looked at him once more with the same expression and suddenly burst out laughing: then she drew her hands over her forehead and moaned:

"Oh! my God! Let me forget! . . ."

Sleep overcame her. She was at peace until day. About dawn she moved a little: Braun raised her head to give her to drink: she gulped down a few mouthfuls, and, stooping to Braun's hands, she kissed them. Once more she dozed off.

On the Saturday morning she woke up about nine o'clock. Without saying a word, she began to slip out of bed. Braun went quickly to her and tried to make her lie down again. She insisted. He asked her what she wanted to do. She replied:

"Go to church."

He tried to argue with her and to remind her that it was not Sunday and the church was closed. She relapsed into silence: but she sat in a chair near the bed, and began to put on her clothes with trembling fingers. Braun's doctor-friend came in. He joined Braun in his entreaties: then, seeing that she would not give in, he examined her, and finally consented. He took Braun aside, and told him that his wife's illness seemed to be altogether moral, and that for the time being he must avoid opposing her wishes, and that he could see no danger in her going out, so long as Braun went with her. Braun told Anna that he would go with her. She refused, and insisted on going alone. But she stumbled as soon as she tried to walk across the room. Then, without a word, she took Braun's arm, and they went out. She was very weak, and kept stopping. Several times he asked her if she wanted to go home. She began to walk on. When they reached the church,

as he had told her, they found the doors closed. Anna sat down on a bench near the door, and stayed, shivering, until the clock struck twelve. Then she took Braun's arm again, and they came home in silence. But in the evening she wanted to go to church again. Braun's entreaties were useless. He had to go out with her once more.

Christophe had spent the two days alone. Braun was too anxious to think about him. Only once, on the Saturday morning, when he was trying to divert Anna's mind from her fixed idea of going out, he had asked her if she would like to see Christophe. She had looked at him with such an expression of fear and loathing that he could not but remark it: and he never pronounced Christophe's name again.

Christophe had shut himself up in his room. Anxiety, love, remorse, a very chaos of sorrow was whirling in him. He blamed himself for everything. He was overwhelmed by self-disgust. More than once he had got up to go and confess the whole story to Braun—and each time he had immediately been arrested by the thought of bringing wretchedness to yet another human being by his self-accusation. At the same time he was spared nothing of his passion. He prowled about in the passage outside Anna's room; and when he heard footsteps inside coming to the door he rushed away to his own room.

When Braun and Anna went out in the afternoon, he looked out for them from behind his window-curtains. He saw Anna. She who had been so erect and proud walked now with bowed back, lowered head, yellow complexion: she was an old woman bending under the weight of the cloak and shawl her husband had thrown about her: she was ugly. But Christophe did not see her ugliness: he saw only her misery; and his heart ached with pity and love. He longed to run to her, to prostrate himself in the mud, to kiss her feet: her dear body so broken and destroyed by passion, and to implore her forgiveness. And he thought as he looked after her:

"My work. . . . That is what I have done!"

But when he looked into the mirror and saw his own face, he was shown the same devastation in his eyes, in all his features: he saw the marks of death upon himself, as upon her, and he thought:

"My work? No. It is the work of the cruel Master who drives us mad and destroys us."

The house was empty. Bäbi had gone out to tell the neighbors of the day's events. Time was passing. The clock struck five. Christophe was filled with terror as he thought of Anna's return and the coming of the night. He felt that he could not bear to stay under the same roof with her for another night. He felt his reason breaking beneath the weight of passion. He did not know what to do, he did not know what he wanted, except that he wanted Anna at all costs. He thought of the wretched face he had just seen going past his window, and he said to himself:

"I must save her from myself! . . ."

His will stirred into life.

He gathered together the litter of papers on the table, tied them up, took his hat and cloak, and went out. In the passage, near the door of Anna's room, he hurried forward in a spasm of fear. Downstairs he glanced for the last time into the empty garden. He crept away like a thief in the night. An icy mist pricked his face and hands. Christophe skirted the walls of the houses, dreading a meeting with any one he knew. He went to the station, and got into a train which was just starting for Lucerne. At the first stopping-place he wrote to Braun. He said that he had been called away from the town on urgent business for a few days, and that he was very sorry to have to leave him at such a time: he begged him to send him news, and gave him an address. At Lucerne he took the St. Gothard train. Late at night he got out at a little station between Altorf and Goeschenen. He did not know the name, never knew it. He went into the nearest inn by the station. The road was filled with pools of water. It was raining in torrents: it rained all night and all next day. The water was rushing and roaring like a cataract from a broken gutter. Sky and earth were drowned, seemingly dissolved and melted like his own mind. He went to bed between damp sheets which smelt of railway smoke. He could not lie still. The idea of the danger hanging over Anna was too much in his mind for him to feel his own suffering as yet. Somehow he must avert public malignity from her, somehow turn it aside upon another track. In

his feverish condition a queer idea came to him: he decided to write to one of the few musicians with whom he had been acquainted in the little town, Krebs, the confectioner-organist. He gave him to understand that he was off to Italy upon an affair of the heart, that he had been possessed by the passion when he first took up his abode with the Brauns, and that he had tried to shake free of it, but it had been too strong for him. He put the whole thing clearly enough for Krebs to understand, and yet so veiled as to enable him to improve on it as he liked. Christophe implored Krebs to keep his secret. He knew that the good little man simply could not keep anything to himself, and—quite rightly—he reckoned on Krebs hastening to spread the news as soon as it came into his hands. To make sure of hoodwinking the gossips of the town Christophe closed his letter with a few cold remarks about Braun and about Anna's illness.

He spent the rest of the night and the next day absorbed by his fixed idea . . . Anna . . . Anna. . . . He lived through the last few months with her, day by day: he did not see her as she was, but enveloped her with a passionate atmosphere of illusion. From the very beginning he had created her in the image of his own desire, and given her a moral grandeur, a tragic consciousness which he needed to heighten his love for her. These lies of passion gained in intensity of conviction now that they were beyond the control of Anna's presence. He saw in her a healthy free nature, oppressed, struggling to shake off its fetters, reaching upwards to a wider life of liberty in the open air of the soul, and then, fearful of it, struggling against her dreams, wrestling with them, because they could not be brought into line with her destiny, and made it only the more sorrowful and wretched. She cried to him: "Help me." He saw once more her beautiful body, clasped it to him. His memories tortured him: he took a savage delight in mortifying the wounds they dealt him. As the day crept on, the feeling of all that he had lost became so frightful that he could not breathe.

Without knowing what he was doing, he got up, went out, paid his bill, and took the first train back to the town in which Anna lived. He arrived in the middle of the night: he went

straight to the house. There was a wall between the alley and the garden next to Braun's. Christophe climbed the wall, jumped down into the next-door garden, and then into Braun's. He stood outside the house. It was in darkness save for a night-light which cast a yellow glow upon a window—the window of Anna's room. Anna was there. She was suffering. He had only to make one stride to enter. He laid his hand on the handle of the door. Then he looked at his hand, the door, the garden: suddenly he realized what he was doing: and, breaking free of the hallucination which had been upon him for the last seven or eight hours, he groaned, wrenched free of the inertia which held him riveted to the ground whereon he stood, ran to the wall, scaled it, and fled.

That same night he left the town for the second time: and next day he went and buried himself in a mountain village, hidden from the world by driving blizzards.—There he would bury his heart, stupefy his thoughts, and forget, and forget! . . .

—"*Éperò leva su, vinci l'ambascia*
Con l'animo che vinca ogni battaglia,
Se col suo grave corpo non s'accascia.

"*Leva'mi allor, mostrandomi fornito*
Meglio di lena ch'io non mi sentia;
E dissi: 'Va, ch'io son forte edardito.'"

INF. XXIV.

Oh! God, what have I done to Thee? Why dost Thou overwhelm me? Since I was a little child Thou hast appointed misery and conflict to be my lot. I have struggled without complaint. I have loved my misery. I have tried to preserve the purity of the soul Thou gavest me, to defend the fire which Thou hast kindled in me. . . . Lord, it is Thou, it is Thou who art so furious to destroy what Thou hast created. Thou hast put out the fire, Thou hast besmirched my soul. Thou hast despoiled me of all that gave me life. I had but two treasurable things in the world: my friend and my soul. Now I have nothing, for Thou hast taken everything from me. One only creature was mine in the wilderness of the world: Thou hast taken him from me. Our hearts were one. Thou hast torn them asunder: Thou hast made us know the sweetness of being together only to make us know the horror of being lost to each other. Thou hast created emptiness all about me. Thou hast created emptiness within me. I was broken and sick, unarmed and robbed of my will. Thou hast chosen that hour to strike me down. Thou hast come stealthily with silent feet from behind treacherously, and Thou hast stabbed me: Thou hast let loose upon me Thy fierce dogs of passion; I was weak, and Thou knewest it, and I could not struggle: passion has laid me low, and thrown me into confusion, and befouled me, and destroyed all that I had. . . . I am left only in self-disgust. If I could only cry aloud my grief and my shame! or forget them in the rushing stream of creative force! But my strength is broken, and my creative power is withered up. I am like a dead tree. . . . Would I were dead! O God, deliver me, break my body and my soul, tear me from this earth, leave me not to struggle blindly in the pit, leave me not in this endless agony! I cry for mercy. . . . Lord, make an end!

So in his sorrow Christophe cried upon a God in whom his reason did not believe.

He had taken refuge in a lonely farm in the Swiss Jura Mountains. The house was built in the woods tucked away in the folds of a high humpy plateau. It was protected from

the north winds by crags and boulders. In front of it lay a wide stretch of fields, and long wooded slopes: the rock suddenly came to an end in a sheer precipice: twisted pines hung on the edge of it; behind were wide-spreading beeches. The sky was blotted out. There was no sign of life. A wide stretch of country with all its lines erased. The whole place lay sleeping under the snow. Only at night in the forest foxes barked. It was the end of the winter. Slow dragging winter. Interminable winter. When it seemed like to break up, snow would fall once more, and it would begin again.

However, for a week now the old slumbering earth had felt its heart slow beating to new birth. The first deceptive breath of spring crept into the air and beneath the frozen crust. From the branches of the beech-trees, stretched out like soaring wings, the snow melted. Already through the white cloak of the fields there peered a few thin blades of grass of tender green: around their sharp needles, through the gaps in the snow, like so many little mouths, the dank black earth was breathing. For a few hours every day the voice of the waters, sleeping beneath their robe of ice, murmured. In the skeleton woods a few birds piped their shrill clear song.

Christophe noticed nothing. All things were the same to him. He paced up and down, up and down his room. Or he would walk outside. He could not keep still. His soul was torn in pieces by inward demons. They fell upon and rent each other. His suppressed passion never left off beating furiously against the walls of the house of its captivity. His disgust with passion was no less furiously in revolt: passion and disgust flew at each other's throats, and, in their conflict, they lacerated his heart. And at the same time he was delivered up to the memory of Olivier, despair at his death, the hunger to create which nothing could satisfy, and pride rearing on the edge of the abyss of nothingness. He was a prey to all devils. He had no moment of respite. Or, if there came a seeming calm, if the rushing waves did fall back for a moment, it was only that he might find himself alone, and nothing in himself: thought, love, will, all had been done to death.

To create! That was the only loophole. To abandon the wreck of his life to the mercy of the waves! To save himself

by swimming in the dreams of art! . . . To create! He tried. . . . He could not.

Christophe had never had any method of working. When he was strong and well he had always rather suffered from his superabundance than been disturbed at seeing it diminish: he followed his whim: he used to work first as the fancy took him, as circumstances chanced, with no fixed rule. As a matter of fact, he was always working everywhere: his brain was always busy. Often and often Olivier, who was less richly endowed and more reflective, had warned him:

"Take care. You are trusting too much to your force. It is a mountain torrent. Full to-day, perhaps dry to-morrow. An artist must coax his genius: he must not let it scatter itself at random. Turn your force into a channel. Train yourself in habits of mind and a healthy system of daily work, at fixed hours. They are as necessary to the artist as the practice of military movements and steps to a man who is to go into battle. When moments of crisis come—(and they always do come)—the bracing of steel prevents the soul from destruction. I know. It is just that that has saved me from death."

But Christophe used to laugh and say:

"That's all right for you, my boy! There's no danger of my losing my taste for life. My appetite's too good."

Olivier would shrug his shoulders:

"Too much ends in too little. There are no worse invalids than the men who have always had too much health."

And now Olivier's words had come true. After the death of his friend the source of his inward life had not all at once dried up: but it had become strangely intermittent: it flowed in sudden gushes, then stopped, then disappeared under the earth. Christophe had paid no heed to it: what did it matter to him? His grief and his budding passion had absorbed his mind.—But after the storm had passed, when once more he turned to the fountain to drink, he could find no trace of it. All was barren. Not a trickle of water. His soul was dried up. In vain did he try to dig down into the sand, and force the water up from the subterranean wells, and create at all costs: the machine of his mind refused to obey. He could not invoke the aid of habit, the faithful ally, which, when we

have lost every reason for living, alone, constant and firmly loyal, stays with us, and speaks no word, and makes no sign, but with eyes fixed, and silent lips, with its sure unwavering hand leads us by the hand through the dangerous chasm until the light of day and the joy of life return. Christophe was helpless: and his hand could find no guiding hand in the darkness. He could not find his way back to the light of day.

It was the supreme test. Then he felt that he was on the verge of madness. Sometimes he would wage an absurd and crazy battle with his own brain, maniacal obsessions, a nightmare of numbers: he would count the boards on the floor, the trees in the forest: figures and chords, the choice of which was beyond his reason. Sometimes he would lie in a state of prostration, like one dead.

Nobody worried about him. He lived apart in one wing of the house. He tidied his own room—or left it undone, every day. His meals were laid for him downstairs: he never saw a human face. His host, an old peasant, a taciturn, selfish creature, took no interest in him. Whether Christophe ate or did not eat was his affair. He hardly ever noticed whether Christophe came in at night. Once he was lost in the forest, buried up to his hips in the snow: he was very near never returning. He tried to wear himself out to keep himself from thinking. He could not succeed. Only now and then could he snatch a few hours of troubled sleep.

Only one living creature seemed to take any notice of his existence: this was an old St. Bernard, who used to come and lay his big head with its mournful eyes on Christophe's knees when Christophe was sitting on the seat in front of the house. They would look long at each other. Christophe would not drive him away. Unlike the sick Goethe, the dog's eyes had no uneasiness for him. Unlike him, he had no desire to cry:

"Go away! . . . Thou goblin, thou shalt not catch me, whatever thou doest!"

He asked nothing better than to be engrossed by the dog's suppliant sleepy eyes and to help the beast: he felt that there must be behind them an imprisoned soul imploring his aid.

In those hours when he was weak with suffering, torn alive away from life, devoid of human egoism, he saw the victims

of men, the field of battle in which man triumphed in the bloody slaughter of all other creatures: and his heart was filled with pity and horror. Even in the days when he had been happy he had always loved the beasts: he had never been able to bear cruelty towards them: he had always had a detestation of sport, which he had never dared to express for fear of ridicule: perhaps even he had never dared to admit it to himself: but his feeling of repulsion had been the secret cause of the apparently inexplicable feeling of dislike he had had for certain men: he had never been able to admit to his friendship a man who could kill an animal for pleasure. It was not sentimentality: no one knew better than he that life is based on suffering and infinite cruelty: no man can live without making others suffer. It is no use closing our eyes and fobbing ourselves off with words. It is no use either coming to the conclusion that we must renounce life and sniveling like children. No. We must kill to live, if, at the time, there is no other means of living. But the man who kills for the sake of killing is a miscreant. An unconscious miscreant, I know. But, all the same, a miscreant. The continual endeavor of man should be to lessen the sum of suffering and cruelty: that is the first duty of humanity.

In ordinary life those ideas remained buried in Christophe's inmost heart. He refused to think of them. What was the good? What could he do? He had to be Christophe, he had to accomplish his work, live at all costs, live at the cost of the weak. . . . It was not he who had made the universe. . . . Better not think of it, better not think of it. . . .

But when unhappiness had dragged him down, him, too, to the level of the vanquished, he had to think of these things. Only a little while ago he had blamed Olivier for plunging into futile remorse and vain compassion for all the wretchedness that men suffer and inflict. Now he went even farther: with all the vehemence of his mighty nature he probed to the depths of the tragedy of the universe: he suffered all the sufferings of the world, and was left raw and bleeding. He could not think of the animals without shuddering in anguish. He looked into the eyes of the beasts and saw there a soul like his own, a soul which could not speak: but the eyes cried for it:

"What have I done to you? Why do you hurt me?"

He could not bear to see the most ordinary sights that he had seen hundreds of times—a calf crying in a wicker pen, with its big, protruding eyes, with their bluish whites and pink lids, and white lashes, its curly white tufts on its forehead, its purple snout, its knock-kneed legs:—a lamb being carried by a peasant with its four legs tied together, hanging head down, trying to hold its head up, moaning like a child, bleating and lolling its gray tongue:—fowls huddled together in a basket:—the distant squeals of a pig being bled to death:—a fish being cleaned on the kitchen-table. . . . The nameless tortures which men inflict on such innocent creatures made his heart ache. Grant animals a ray of reason, imagine what a frightful nightmare the world is to them: a dream of cold-blooded men, blind and deaf, cutting their throats, slitting them open, gutting them, cutting them into pieces, cooking them alive, sometimes laughing at them and their contortions as they writhe in agony. Is there anything more atrocious among the cannibals of Africa? To a man whose mind is free there is something even more intolerable in the sufferings of animals than in the sufferings of men. For with the latter it is at least admitted that suffering is evil and that the man who causes it is a criminal. But thousands of animals are uselessly butchered every day without a shadow of remorse. If any man were to refer to it, he would be thought ridiculous.—And that is the unpardonable crime. That alone is the justification of all that men may suffer. It cries vengeance upon all the human race. If God exists and tolerates it, it cries vengeance upon God. If there exists a good God, then even the most humble of living things must be saved. If God is good only to the strong, if there is no justice for the weak and lowly, for the poor creatures who are offered up as a sacrifice to humanity, then there is no such thing as goodness, no such thing as justice. . . .

Alas! The slaughter accomplished by man is so small a thing of itself in the carnage of the universe! The animals devour each other. The peaceful plants, the silent trees, are ferocious beasts one to another. The serenity of the forests is only a commonplace of easy rhetoric for the literary men who only know Nature through their books! . . . In the

forest hard by, a few yards away from the house, there were frightful struggles always toward. The murderous beeches flung themselves upon the pines with their lovely pinkish stems, hemmed in their slenderness with antique columns, and stifled them. They rushed down upon the oaks and smashed them, and made themselves crutches of them. The beeches were like Briareus with his hundred arms, ten trees in one tree! They dealt death all about them. And when, failing foes, they came together, they became entangled, piercing, cleaving, twining round each other like antediluvian monsters. Lower down, in the forest, the acacias had left the outskirts and plunged into the thick of it and attacked the pinewoods, strangling and tearing up the roots of their foes, poisoning them with their secretions. It was a struggle to the death in which the victors at once took possession of the room and the spoils of the vanquished. Then the smaller monsters would finish the work of the great. Fungi, growing between the roots, would suck at the sick tree, and gradually empty it of its vitality. Black ants would grind exceeding small the rotting wood. Millions of invisible insects were gnawing, boring, reducing to dust what had once been life. . . . And the silence of the struggle! . . . Oh! the peace of Nature, the tragic mask that covers the sorrowful and cruel face of Life!

Christophe was going down and down. But he was not the kind of man to let himself drown without a struggle, with his arms held close to his sides. In vain did he wish to die: he did everything in his power to remain alive. He was one of those men of whom Mozart said: *"They must act until at last they have no means of action."* He felt that he was sinking, and in his fall he cast about, striking out with his arms to right and left, for some support to which to cling. It seemed to him that he had found it. He had just remembered Olivier's little boy. At once he turned on him all his desire for life: he clung to him desperately. Yes: he must go and find him, claim him, bring him up, love him, take the place of his father, bring Olivier to life again in his son. Why had he not thought of it in the selfishness of his sorrow? He wrote to Cécile, who had charge of the boy. He waited feverishly for her reply. His

whole being was bent upon the one thought. He forced himself to be calm: he still had reason for hope. He was quite confident about it: he knew how kind Cécile was.

Her answer came. Cécile said that three months after Olivier's death, a lady in black had come to her house and said:

"Give me back my child!"

It was Jacqueline, who had deserted her child and Olivier,—Jacqueline, but so changed that she had hardly recognized her. Her mad love affair had not lasted. She had wearied of her lover more quickly than her lover had done of her. She had come back broken, disgusted, aged. The too flagrant scandal of her adventure had closed many doors to her. The least scrupulous had not been the least severe. Even her mother had been so offensive and so contemptuous that Jacqueline had found it impossible to stay with her. She had seen through and through the world's hypocrisy. Olivier's death had been the last blow. She seemed so utterly sorrowful that Cécile had not thought it right to refuse to let her have her boy. It was hard for her to have to give up the little creature, whom she had grown so used to regarding as her own. But how could she make things even harder for a woman who had more right than herself, a woman who was further more unhappy? She had wanted to write to Christophe to ask his advice. But Christophe had never answered the letters she had written him, she did not know his address, she did not even know whether he was alive or dead. . . . Joy comes and goes. What could she do? Only resign herself to the inevitable. The main thing was for the child to be happy and to be loved. . . .

The letter reached him in the evening. A belated gust of winter brought back the snow. It fell all night. In the forest, where already the young leaves had appeared, the trees cracked and split beneath the weight of it. They went off like a battery of artillery. Alone in his room, without a light, surrounded only by the phosphorescent darkness, Christophe sat listening to the tragic sounds of the forest, and started at every crack: and he was like one of the trees bending beneath its load and snapping. He said to himself:

"Now the end has come."

Night passed. Day came. The tree was not broken. All through the new day and the following night the tree went on bending and cracking: but it did not break. Christophe had no reason for living left: and he went on living. He had no motive for struggling; and he struggled, body to body, foot to foot, with the invisible enemy who was bending his back. He was like Jacob with the angel. He expected nothing from the fight, he expected nothing now but the end, rest; and he went on fighting. And he cried aloud:

"Break me and have done! Why dost thou not throw me down?"

Days passed. Christophe issued from the fight, utterly lifeless. Yet he would not lie down, and insisted on going out and walking. Happy are those men who are sustained by the fortitude of their race in the hours of eclipse of their lives! Though the body of the son was near breaking-point, the strength of the father and the grandfather held him up: the energy and impetus of his robust ancestors sustained his broken soul, like a dead knight being carried along by his horse.

Along a precipitous road he went with a ravine on either hand: he went down the narrow path, thick with sharp stones, among which coiled the gnarled roots of the little stunted oaks: he did not know where he was going, and yet he was more sure-footed than if he had been moving under the lucid direction of his will. He had not slept, he had hardly eaten anything for several days. He saw a mist in front of his eyes. He walked down towards the valley.—It was Easter-week. A cloudy day. The last assault of winter had been overcome. The warmth of spring was brooding. From the villages far down the sound of bells came up: first from a village nestling in a hollow at the foot of the mountain, with its dappled thatched roofs, dark and light in patches, covered with thick, velvety moss. Then from another, out of sight, on the other slope of the hill. Then, others down on the plain beyond the river. And the distant hum of a town seen hazily in the mist. Christophe stopped. His heart almost stopped beating. Their voices seemed to be saying:

"Come with us. Here is peace. Here sorrow is dead. Dead, and thought is dead too. We croon so sweetly to the soul that it sleeps in our arms. Come, and rest, and thou shalt not wake again."

He felt so worn out! He was so fain to sleep! But he shook his head and said:

"It is not peace that I seek, but life."

He went on his way. He walked for miles without noticing it. In his state of weakness and hallucination the simplest sensations came to him with unexpected resonance. Over earth and air his mind cast fantastic lights. A shadow, with nothing to cause it that he could see, going before him on the white and sunless road, made him tremble.

As he emerged from a wood he found himself near a village. He turned back: the sight of men hurt him. However, he could not avoid passing by a lonely house above the hamlet: it was built on the side of the mountain, and looked like a sanatorium: it was surrounded by a large garden open to the sun; a few men were wandering with faltering footsteps along the gravel paths. Christophe did not look at it particularly: but at a turn of the path he came face to face with a man with pale eyes and a fat, yellow face, staring blankly, who had sunk down on a seat at the foot of two poplar trees. Another man was sitting by his side: they were both silent. Christophe walked past them. But, a few yards on, he stopped: the man's eyes had seemed familiar to him. He turned. The man had not stirred: he was still staring fixedly at something in front of him. But his companion looked at Christophe, who beckoned to him. He came up.

"Who is he?" asked Christophe.

"A patient in the asylum," said the man, pointing to the house.

"I think I know him," said Christophe.

"Possibly," replied the man. "He was a well-known writer in Germany."

Christophe mentioned a name.—Yes. That was the name.—He had met him once in the days when he was writing for Mannheim's review. Then, they were enemies: Christophe was only just beginning, and the other was already famous. He

had been a man of considerable power, very self-confident, very contemptuous of other men's work, a novelist whose realistic and sensual writings had stood out above the mediocrity of the productions of his day. Christophe, who detested the man, could not help admiring the perfection of his materialistic art, which was sincere, though limited.

"He went mad a year ago," said the keeper. "He was treated, regarded as cured, and sent home. Then he went mad again. One evening he threw himself out of the window. At first, when he came here, he used to fling himself about and shout. But now he is quite quiet. He spends his days sitting there, as you see."

"What is he looking at?" asked Christophe.

He went up to the seat, and looked pitifully at the pale face of the madman, with his heavy eyelids drooping over his eyes: one of them seemed to be almost shut. The madman seemed to be unaware of Christophe's presence. Christophe spoke to him by name and took his hand—a soft, clammy hand, which lay limp in his like a dead thing: he had not the courage to keep it in his: the man raised his glazing eyes to Christophe for a moment, then went on staring straight in front of him with his besotted smile. Christophe asked:

"What are you looking at?"

The man said, without moving, in a whisper:

"I am waiting."

"What for?"

"The Resurrection."

Christophe started back. He walked hurriedly away. The word had burnt into his very soul.

He plunged into the forest, and climbed up the hillside in the direction of his own house. In his confusion he missed his way, and found himself in the middle of an immense pine-wood. Darkness and silence. A few patches of sunlight of a pale, ruddy gold, come it was impossible to tell whence, fell aslant the dense shadows. Christophe was hypnotized by these patches of light. Round him everything seemed to be in darkness. He walked along over the carpet of pine-needles, tripping over the roots which stood out like swollen veins. At the foot of the trees were neither plants nor moss. In the branches was

never the song of a bird. The lower branches were dead. All the life of the place had fled upwards to meet the sun. Soon even the life overhead would be gone. Christophe passed into a part of the wood which was visited by some mysterious pestilence. A kind of long, delicate lichen, like spiders' webs, had fastened upon the branches of the red pines, and wrapped them about with its meshes, binding them from hand to foot, passing from tree to tree, choking the life out of the forest. It was like the deep-sea alga with its subtle tentacles. There was in the place the silence of the depths of the ocean. High overhead hung the pale sun. Mists which had crept insidiously through the forest encompassed Christophe. Everything disappeared: there was nothing to be seen. For half an hour Christophe wandered at random in the web of the white mist, which grew slowly thicker, black, and crept down into his throat: he thought he was going straight: but he was walking in a circle beneath the gigantic spiders' webs hanging from the stifled pines: the mist, passing through them, left them enriched with shivering drops of water. At last the meshes were rent asunder, a hole was made, and Christophe managed to make his way out of the submarine forest. He came to living woods and the silent conflict of the pines and the beeches. But everywhere there was the same stillness. The silence, which had been brooding for hours, was agonizing. Christophe stopped to listen. . . .

Suddenly, in the distance, there came a storm. A premonitory gust of wind blew up from the depths of the forest. Like a galloping horse it rushed over the swaying tree-tops. It was like the God of Michael Angelo passing in a water-spout. It passed over Christophe's head. The forest rustled, and Christophe's heart quivered. It was the Annunciation. . . .

Silence came again. In a state of holy terror Christophe walked quickly home, with his legs giving way beneath him. At the door of the house he glanced fearfully behind him, like a hunted man. All Nature seemed dead. The forests which covered the sides of the mountain were sleeping, lying heavy beneath a weight of sadness. The still air was magically clear and transparent. There was never a sound. Only the melancholy music of a stream—water eating away the rock—sounded the knell of the earth. Christophe went to bed in a fever. In

the stable hard by the beasts stirred as restlessly and uneasily as he. . . .

Night. He had dozed off. In the silence the distant storm arose once more. The wind returned, like a hurricane now,—the *fœhn* of the spring, with its burning breath warming the still sleeping, chilly earth, the *fœhn* which melts the ice and gathers fruitful rains. It rumbled like thunder in the forests on the other side of the ravine. It came nearer, swelled, charged up the slopes: the whole mountain roared. In the stable a horse neighed and the cows lowed. Christophe's hair stood on end, he sat up in bed and listened. The squall came up screaming, set the shutters banging, the weather-cocks squeaking, made the slates of the roof go crashing down, and the whole house shake. A flower-pot fell and was smashed. Christophe's window was insecurely fastened, and was burst open with a bang, and the warm wind rushed in. Christophe received its blast full in his face and on his naked chest. He jumped out of bed gaping, gasping, choking. It was as though the living God were rushing into his empty soul. The Resurrection! . . . The air poured down his throat, the flood of new life swelled through him and penetrated to his very marrow. He felt like to burst, he wanted to shout, to shout for joy and sorrow: and there would only come inarticulate sounds from his mouth. He reeled, he beat on the walls with his arms, while all around him were sheets of paper flying on the wind. He fell down in the middle of the room and cried:

"O Thou, Thou! Thou art come back to me at last!"

"Thou art come back to me, Thou art come back to me! O Thou, whom I had lost! . . . Why didst Thou abandon me?"

"To fulfil My task, that thou didst abandon."

"What task?"

"My fight."

"What need hast Thou to fight? Art Thou not master of all?"

"I am not the master."

"Art Thou not All that Is?"

"I am not all that is. I am Life fighting Nothingness. I am not Nothingness, I am the Fire which burns in the Night.

I am not the Night. I am the eternal Light; I am not an eternal destiny soaring above the fight. I am free Will which struggles eternally. Struggle and burn with Me."

"I am conquered. I am good for nothing."

"Thou art conquered? All seems lost to thee? Others will be conquerors. Think not of thyself, think of My army."

"I am alone. I have none but myself. I belong to no army."

"Thou art not alone, and thou dost not belong to thyself. Thou art one of My voices, thou art one of My arms. Speak and strike for Me. But if the arm be broken, or the voice be weary, then still I hold My ground: I fight with other voices, other arms than thine. Though thou art conquered, yet art thou of the army which is never vanquished. Remember that and thou wilt fight even unto death."

"Lord, I have suffered much!"

"Thinkest thou that I do not suffer also? For ages death has hunted Me and nothingness has lain in wait for Me. It is only by victory in the fight that I can make My way. The river of life is red with My blood."

"Fighting, always fighting?"

"We must always fight. God is a fighter, even He Himself. God is a conqueror. He is a devouring lion. Nothingness hems Him in and He hurls it down. And the rhythm of the fight is the supreme harmony. Such harmony is not for thy mortal ears. It is enough for thee to know that it exists. Do thy duty in peace and leave the rest to the Gods."

"I have no strength left."

"Sing for those who are strong."

"My voice is gone."

"Pray."

"My heart is foul."

"Pluck it out. Take Mine."

"Lord, it is easy to forget myself, to cast away my dead soul. But how can I cast out the dead? how can I forget those whom I have loved?"

"Abandon the dead with thy dead soul. Thou wilt find them alive with My living soul."

"Thou hast left me once: wilt Thou leave me again?"

"I shall leave thee again. Never doubt that. It is for thee never to leave Me more."

"But if the flame of my life dies down?"

"Then do thou kindle others."

"And if death is in me?"

"Life is otherwhere. Go, open thy gates to life. Thou insensate man, to shut thyself up in thy ruined house! Quit thyself. There are other mansions."

"O Life, O Life! I see . . . I sought thee in myself, in my own empty shut-in soul. My soul is broken: the sweet air pours in through the windows of my wounds: I breathe again. I have found Thee once more, O Life! . . ."

"I have found thee again. . . . Hold thy peace, and listen."

And like the murmuring of a spring, Christophe heard the song of life bubbling up in him. Leaning out of his window, he saw the forest, which yesterday had been dead, seething with life under the sun and the wind, heaving like the Ocean. Along the stems of the trees, like thrills of joy, the waves of the wind passed: and the yielding branches held their arms in ecstasy up to the brilliant sky. And the torrent rang out merrily as a bell. The countryside had risen from the grave in which yesterday it had been entombed: life had entered it at the time when love passed into Christophe's heart. Oh! the miracle of the soul touched by grace, awaking to new life! Then everything comes to life again all round it. The heart begins to beat once more. The eye of the spirit is opened. The dried-up fountains begin once more to flow.

And Christophe returned to the Divine conflict. . . . How his own fight, how all the conflicts of men were lost in that gigantic battle, wherein the suns rain down like flakes of snow tossing on the wind! . . . He had laid bare his soul. And, just as in those dreams in which one hovers in space, he felt that he was soaring above himself, he saw himself from above, in the general plan of the world; and the meaning of his efforts, the price of his suffering, were revealed to him at a glance. His struggles were a part of the great fight of the worlds. His overthrow was a momentary episode, immediately repaired. Just

as he fought for all, so all fought for him. They shared his trials, he shared their glory.

"Companions, enemies, walk over me, crush me, let me feel the cannons which shall win victory pass over my body! I do not think of the iron which cuts deep into my flesh, I do not think of the foot that tramples down my head, I think of my Avenger, the Master, the Leader of the countless army. My blood shall cement the victory of the future. . . ."

God was not to him the impassive Creator, a Nero from his tower of brass watching the burning of the City to which he himself has set fire. God was fighting. God was suffering. Fighting and suffering with all who fight and for all who suffer. For God was Life, the drop of light fallen into the darkness, spreading out, reaching out, drinking up the night. But the night is limitless, and the Divine struggle will never cease: and none can know how it will end. It was a heroic symphony wherein the very discords clashed together and mingled and grew into a serene whole! Just as the beech-forest in silence furiously wages war, so Life carries war into the eternal peace.

The wars and the peace rang echoing through Christophe. He was like a shell wherein the ocean roars. Epic shouts passed, and trumpet calls, and tempestuous sounds borne upon sovereign rhythms. For in that sonorous soul everything took shape in sound. It sang of light. It sang of darkness, sang of life and death. It sang for those who were victorious in battle. It sang for himself who was conquered and laid low. It sang. All was song. It was nothing but song.

It was so drunk with it that it could not hear its own song. Like the spring rains, the torrents of music disappeared into the earth that was cracked by the winter. Shame, grief, bitterness now revealed their mysterious mission: they had decomposed the earth and they had fertilized it. The share of sorrow, breaking the heart, had opened up new sources of life. The waste land had once more burst into flower. But they were not the old spring flowers. A new soul had been born.

Every moment it was springing into birth. For it was not yet shaped and hardened, like the souls that have come to the

end of their belief, the souls which are at the point of death. It was not the finished statue. It was molten metal. Every second made a new universe of it. Christophe had no thought of setting bounds upon himself. He gave himself up to the joy of a man leaving behind him the burden of his past and setting out on a long voyage, with youth in his blood, freedom in his heart, to breathe the sea air, and think that the voyage will never come to an end. Now that he was caught up again by the creative force which flows through the world, he was amazed to the point of ecstasy at the world's wealth. He loved, he *was*, his neighbor as himself. And all things were "neighbors" to him, from the grass beneath his feet to the man whose hand he clasped. A fine tree, the shadow of a cloud on the mountain, the breath of the fields borne upward on the wind, and, at night, the hive of heaven buzzing with the swarming suns . . . his blood raced through him . . . he had no desire to speak or to think, he desired only to laugh and to cry, and to melt away into the living marvel of it all. Write? Why should he write? Can a man write the inexpressible? . . . But whether it were possible or no, he had to write. It was his law. Ideas would come to him in flashes, wherever he might be, most often when he was out walking. He could not wait. Then he would write with anything, on anything that came to hand: and very often he could not have told the meaning of the phrases which came rushing forth from him with irresistible impetuosity: and, as he wrote, more ideas would come, more and more: and he would write and write, on his shirt cuffs, in the lining of his hat. Quickly though he wrote, yet his thoughts would leap ahead, and he had to use a sort of shorthand.

They were only rough notes. The difficulty began when he tried to turn his ideas into the ordinary musical forms: he discovered that none of the conventional molds were in the least suitable: if he wanted to fix his visions with any sort of fidelity, he had to begin by forgetting all the music he had ever heard, everything he had ever written, make a clean sweep of all the formulæ he had ever learned, and the traditional technique; fling away all such crutches of the impotent mind, the comfortable bed made for the indolence of those who lie back on the thoughts of other men to save themselves the trouble of

thinking for themselves. A short while ago, when he thought that he had reached maturity in life and art—(as a matter of fact he had only been at the end of one of his lives and one of his incarnations in art),—he had expressed himself in a pre-existing language: his feelings had submitted without revolt to the logic of a pre-established development, which dictated a portion of his phrases in advance, and had led him, docilely enough, along the beaten track to the appointed spot where the public was awaiting him. Now there was no road marked out, and his feelings had to carve out their own path: his mind had only to follow. It was no longer appointed to describe or to analyze passion: it had to become part and parcel of it, and seek to wed its inward law.

At the same time he shed all the contradictions in which he had long been involved, though he had never willingly submitted to them. For, although he was a pure artist, he had often incorporated in his art considerations which are foreign to art: he had endowed it with a social mission. And he had not perceived that there were two men in him: the creative artist who never worried himself about any moral aim, and the man of action, the thinker, who wanted his art to be moral and social. The two would sometimes bring each other to an awkward pass. But now that he was subject to every creative idea, with its organic law, like a reality superior to all reality, he had broken free of practical reason. In truth, he shed none of his contempt for the flabby and depraved immorality of the age: in truth, he still thought that its impure and unwholesome art was the lowest rung of art, because it is a disease, a fungus growing on a rotting trunk: but if art for pleasure's sake is the prostration of art, Christophe by no means opposed to it the short-sighted utilitarianism of art for morality's sake, that winged Pegasus harnessed to the plow. The highest art, the only art which is worthy of the name, is above all temporary laws: it is a comet sweeping through the infinite. It may be that its force is useful, it may be that it is apparently useless and dangerous in the existing order of the workaday world: but it is force, it is movement and fire: it is the lightning darted from heaven: and, for that very reason, it is sacred, for that very reason it is beneficent. The good it does may be of the practical

order: but its real, its Divine benefits are, like faith, of the supernatural order. It is like the sun whence it is sprung. The sun is neither moral nor immoral. It is that which Is. It lightens the darkness of space. And so does art.

And Christophe, being delivered up to art, was amazed to find unknown and unsuspected powers teeming in himself: powers quite apart from his passions, his sorrows, his conscious soul, a stranger soul, indifferent to all his loves and sufferings, to all his life, a joyous, fantastic, wild, incomprehensible soul. It rode him and dug its spurs into his sides. And, in the rare moments when he could stop to take breath, he wondered as he read over what he had written:

"How could such things have come out of me?"

He was a prey to that delirium of the mind which is known to every man of genius, that will which is independent of the will, "*the ineffable enigma of the world and life,*" which Goethe calls "*the demoniac,*" against which he was always armed, though it always overcame him.

And Christophe wrote and wrote. For days and weeks. There are times when the mind, being impregnated, can feed upon itself and go on producing almost indefinitely. The faintest contact with things, the pollen of a flower borne by the wind were enough to make the inward germs, the myriads of germs put forth and come to blossom. Christophe had no time to think, no time to live. His creative soul reigned sovereign over the ruins of his life.

And suddenly it stopped. Christophe came out of that state broken, scorched, older by ten years—but saved. He had left Christophe and gone over to God.

Streaks of white hair had suddenly appeared in his black mane, like those autumn flowers which spring up in the fields in September nights. There were fresh lines on his cheeks. But his eyes had regained their calm expression, and his mouth bore the marks of resignation. He was appeased. He understood now. He understood the vanity of his pride, the vanity of human pride, under the terrible hand of the Force which moves the worlds. No man is surely master of himself. A man must watch. For if he slumbers that Force rushes into

him and whirls him headlong . . . into what dread abysses? or the torrent which bears him along sinks and leaves him on its dry bed. To fight the fight it is not enough to will. A man must humiliate himself before the unknown God, who *flat ubi vult,* who blows where and when He listeth, love, death, or life. Human will can do nothing without God's. One second is enough for Him to obliterate the work of years of toil and effort. And, if it so please Him, He can cause the eternal to spring forth from dust and mud. No man more than the creative artist feels at the mercy of God: for, if he is truly great, he will only say what the Spirit bids him.

And Christophe understood the wisdom of old Haydn who went down on his knees each morning before he took pen in hand. . . . *Vigila et ora.* Watch and pray. Pray to God that He may be with you. Keep in loving and pious communion with the Spirit of life.

Towards the end of summer a Parisian friend of Christophe's, who was passing through Switzerland, discovered his retreat. He was a musical critic who in old days had been an excellent judge of his compositions. He was accompanied by a well-known painter, who was avowedly a whole-hearted admirer of Christophe's. They told him of the very considerable success of his work, which was being played all over Europe. Christophe showed very little interest in the news: the past was dead to him, and his old compositions did not count. At his visitors' request he showed them the music he had written recently. The critic could make nothing of it. He thought Christophe had gone mad.

"No melody, no measure, no thematic workmanship: a sort of liquid core, molten matter which had not hardened, taking any shape, but possessing none of its own: it is like nothing on earth: a glimmering of light in chaos."

Christophe smiled:

"It is quite like that," he said. "The eyes of chaos shining through the veil of order. . . ."

But the critic did not understand Novalis' words:

("He is cleaned out," he thought.)

Christophe did not try to make him understand.

When his visitors were ready to go he walked with them a little, so as to do the honors of his mountain. But he did not go far. Looking down at a field, the musical critic called to mind the scenery of a Parisian theater: and the painter criticised the colors, mercilessly remarking on the awkwardness of their combination, and declaring that to him they had a Swiss flavor, sour, like rhubarb, musty and dull, *à la* Hodler; further, he displayed an indifference to Nature which was not altogether affectation. He pretended to ignore Nature.

"Nature! What on earth is Nature? I don't know. Light, color, very well! But I don't care a hang for Nature!"

Christophe shook hands with them and let them go. That sort of thing had no effect on him now. They were on the other side of the ravine. That was well. He said to nobody in particular:

"If you wish to come up to me, you must take the same road."

The creative fire which had been burning for months had died down. But its comfortable warmth was still in Christophe's heart. He knew that the fire would flare up again: if not in himself, then around him. Wherever it might be, he would love it just the same: it would always be the same fire. On that September evening he could feel it burning throughout all Nature.

He climbed up to the house. There had been a storm. The sun had come out again. The fields were steaming. The ripe fruit was falling from the apple-trees into the wet grass. Spiders' webs, hanging from the branches of the trees, still glittering with the rain, were like the ancient wheels of Mycenean chariots. At the edge of the dripping forest the green woodpecker was trilling his jerky laughter; and myriads of little wasps, dancing in the sunbeams, filled the vault of the woods with their deep, long-drawn organ note.

Christophe came to a clearing, in the hollow of a shoulder of the mountain, a little valley shut in at both ends, a perfect oval in shape, which was flooded with the light of the setting sun: the earth was red: in the midst lay a little golden field of belated crops, and rust-colored rushes. Round about it was a girdle of the woods with their ripe autumn tints: ruddy copper

beeches, pale yellow chestnuts, rowans with their coral berries, flaming cherry-trees with their little tongues of fire, myrtle-bushes with their leaves of orange and lemon and brown and burnt tinder. It was like a burning bush. And from the heart of the flaring cup rose and soared a lark, drunk with the berries and the sun.

And Christophe's soul was like the lark. It knew that it would soon come down to earth again, and many times. But it knew also that it would unwearyingly ascend in the fire, singing its "tirra-lirra" which tells of the light of the heavens to those who are on earth below.

THE NEW DAWN

HERE, AT THE END OF THIS BOOK,

I DEDICATE IT:

TO THE FREE SPIRITS—OF ALL NATIONS—

WHO SUFFER, FIGHT, AND

WILL PREVAIL.

R. R.

PREFACE TO THE LAST VOLUME

OF

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE

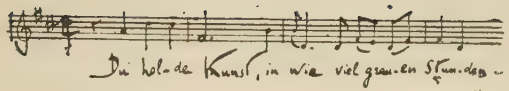
I HAVE written the tragedy of a generation which is nearing its end. I have sought to conceal neither its vices nor its virtues, its profound sadness, its chaotic pride, its heroic efforts, its despondency beneath the overwhelming burden of a superhuman task, the burden of the whole world, the reconstruction of the world's morality, its esthetic principles, its faith, the forging of a new humanity.—Such we have been.

You young men, you men of to-day, march over us, trample us under your feet, and press onward. Be ye greater and happier than we.

For myself, I bid the soul that was mine farewell. I cast it from me like an empty shell. Life is a succession of deaths and resurrections. We must die, Christophe, to be born again.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

October, 1912.



Life passes. Body and soul flow onward like a stream. The years are written in the flesh of the ageing tree. The whole visible world of form is forever wearing out and springing to new life. Thou only dost not pass, immortal music. Thou art the inward sea. Thou art the profound depths of the soul. In thy clear eyes the scowling face of life is not mirrored. Far, far from thee, like the herded clouds, flies the procession of days, burning, icy, feverish, driven by uneasiness, huddling, moving on, on, never for one moment to endure. Thou only dost not pass. Thou art beyond the world. Thou art a whole world to thyself. Thou hast thy sun, thy laws, thy ebb and flow. Thou hast the peace of the stars in the great spaces of the field of night, marking their luminous track—plows of silver guided by the sure hand of the invisible ox-herd.

Music, serene music, how sweet is thy moony light to eyes wearied of the harsh brilliance of this world's sun! The soul that has lived and turned away from the common horse-pond, where, as they drink, men stir up the mud with their feet, nestles to thy bosom, and from thy breasts is suckled with the clear running water of dreams. Music, thou virgin mother, who in thy immaculate womb bearest the fruit of all passions, who in the lake of thy eyes, whereof the color is as the color of rushes, or as the pale green glacier water, enfoldest good and evil, thou art beyond evil, thou art beyond good; he that taketh refuge with thee is raised above the passing of time: the succession of days will be but one day; and death that devours everything on such an one will never close its jaws.

Music, thou who hast rocked my sorrow-laden soul; music, thou who hast made me firm in strength, calm and joyous,—my love and my treasure,—I kiss thy pure lips, I hide my face

in thy honey-sweet hair. I lay my burning eyelids upon the cool palms of thy hands. No word we speak, our eyes are closed, and I see the ineffable light of thine eyes, and I drink the smile of thy silent lips: and, pressed close to thy heart, I listen to the throb of eternal life.

I

Christophe loses count of the fleeting years. Drop by drop life ebbs away. But *his* life is elsewhere. It has no history. His history lies wholly in his creative work. The unceasing buzzing song of music fills his soul, and makes him insensible to the outward tumult.

Christophe has conquered. His name has been forced upon the world. He is ageing. His hair is white. That is nothing to him, his heart is ever young: he has surrendered none of his force, none of his faith. Once more he is calm, but not as he was before he passed by the Burning Bush. In the depths of his soul there is still the quivering of the storm, the memory of his glimpse into the abyss of the raging seas. He knows that no man may boast of being master of himself without the permission of the God of battle. In his soul there are two souls. One is a high plateau swept by winds and shrouded with clouds. The other, higher still, is a snowy peak bathed in light. There it is impossible to dwell; but, when he is frozen by the mists on the lower ground, well he knows the path that leads to the sun. In his misty soul Christophe is not alone. Near him he ever feels the presence of an invisible friend, the sturdy Saint Cecilia, listening with wide, calm eyes to the heavens; and, like the Apostle Paul,—in Raphael's picture,—silent and dreaming, leaning on his sword, he is beyond exasperation, and has no thought of fighting: he dreams, and forges his dreams into form.

During this period of his life he mostly wrote piano and chamber music. In such work he was more free to dare and be bold: it necessitated fewer intermediaries between his ideas and their realization; his ideas were less in danger of losing force in the course of their percolation. Frescobaldi, Couperin, Schubert, and Chopin, in their boldness of expression and style, anticipated the revolutionaries in orchestral music by fifty years. Out of the crude stuff shaped by Christophe's strong hands came

strange and unknown agglomerations of harmony, bewildering combinations of chords, begotten of the remotest kinships of sounds accessible to the senses in these days; they cast a magical and holy spell upon the mind.—But the public must have time to grow accustomed to the conquests and the trophies which a great artist brings back with him from his quest in the deep waters of the ocean. Very few would follow Christophe in the temerity of his later works. His fame was due to his earlier compositions. The feeling of not being understood, which is even more painful in success than in the lack of it, because there seems to be no way out of it, had, since the death of his only friend, aggravated in Christophe his rather morbid tendency to seek isolation from the world.

However, the gates of Germany were open to him once more. In France the tragic brawl had been forgotten. He was free to go whithersoever he pleased. But he was afraid of the memories that would lie in wait for him in Paris. And, although he had spent a few months in Germany and returned there from time to time to conduct performances of his work, he did not settle there. He found too many things which hurt him. They were not particular to Germany: he found them elsewhere. But a man expects more of his own country than any other, and he suffers more from its foibles. It was true, too, that Germany was bearing the greatest burden of the sins of Europe. The victor incurs the responsibility of his victory, a debt towards the vanquished: tacitly the victor is pledged to march in front of them to show them the way. The conquests of Louis XIV. gave Europe the splendor of French reason. What light has the Germany of Sedan given to the world? The glitter of bayonets? Thought without wings, action without generosity, brutal realism, which has not even the excuse of being the realism of healthy men; force and interest: Mars turned bagman. Forty years ago Europe was led astray into the night, and the terrors of the night. The sun was hidden beneath the conqueror's helmet. If the vanquished are too weak to raise the extinguisher, and can claim only pity mingled with contempt, what shall be given to the victor who has done this thing?

A little while ago, day began to peep: little shafts of light

shimmered through the cracks. Being one of the first to see the rising of the sun, Christophe had come out of the shadow of the helmet: gladly he returned to the country in which he had been a sojourner perforce, to Switzerland. Like so many of the spirits of that time, spirits thirsting for liberty, choking in the narrowing circle of the hostile nations, he sought a corner of the earth in which he could stand above Europe and breathe freely. Formerly, in the days of Goethe, the Rome of the free Popes was the island upon which all the winged thought of divers nations came to rest, like birds taking shelter from the storm. Now what refuge is there? The island has been covered by the sea. Rome is no more. The birds have fled from the Seven Hills.—The Alps only are left for them. There, amid the rapacity of Europe, stands (for how long?) the little island of twenty-four cantons. In truth it has not the poetic radiance and glamor of the Eternal City: history has not filled its air with the breath of gods and heroes; but a mighty music rises from the naked Earth; there is an heroic rhythm in the lines of the mountains, and here, more than anywhere else, a man can feel himself in contact with elemental forces. Christophe did not go there in search of romantic pleasure. A field, a few trees, a stream, the wide sky, were enough to make him feel alive. The calm aspect of his native country was sweeter and more companionable to him than the gigantic grandeur of the Alps. But he could not forget that it was here that he had renewed his strength: here God had appeared to him in the Burning Bush; and he never returned thither without a thrill of gratitude and faith. He was not the only one. How many of the combatants of life, ground beneath life's heel, have on that soil renewed their energy to turn again to the fight, and believe once more in its purpose!

Living in that country he had come to know it well. The majority of those who pass through it see only its excrescences: the leprosy of the hotels which defiles the fairest features of that sturdy piece of earth, the stranger cities, the monstrous marts whither all the fatted people of the world come to browse, the *table d'hôte* meals, the masses of food flung into the trough for the nosing beasts: the casino bands with their silly music mingling with the noise of the little horses, the

Italian scum whose disgusting uproar makes the bored wealthy idiots wriggle with pleasure, the fatuous display of the shops—wooden bears, châlets, silly knick-knacks, always the same, repeated time and again, over and over again, with no freshness or invention; the worthy booksellers with their scandalous pamphlets,—all the moral baseness of those places whither every year the idle, joyless millions come who are incapable of finding amusement in the smallest degree finer than that of the multitude, or one tithe as keen.

And they know nothing of the people in whose land they stay. They have no notion of the reserves of moral force and civic liberty which for centuries have been hoarded up in them, coals of the fires of Calvin and Zwingli, still glowing beneath the ashes; they have no conception of the vigorous democratic spirit which will always ignore the Napoleonic Republic, of the simplicity of their institutions, or the breadth of their social undertakings, or the example given to the world by these United States of the three great races of the West, the model of the Europe of the future. Even less do they know of the Daphne concealed beneath this rugged bark, the wild, flashing dreams of Boecklin, the raucous heroism of Hodler, the serene vision and humor of Gottfried Keller, the living tradition of the great popular festivals, and the sap of springtime swelling the trees,—the still young art, sometimes rasping to the palate, like the hard fruits of wild pear-trees, sometimes with the sweetish insipidity of myrtles black and blue, but at least something smacking of the earth, is the work of self-taught men not cut off from the people by an archaic culture, but, with them, reading in the same book of life.

Christophe was in sympathy with these men who strive less to seem than to be, and, under the recent veneer of an ultra-modern industrialism, keep clearly marked the most reposeful features of the old Europe of peasants and townsmen. Among them he had found a few good friends, grave, serious, and faithful, who hold isolated and immured in them regrets for the past; they were looking on at the gradual disappearance of the old Switzerland with a sort of religious fatalism and Calvinistic pessimism; great gray souls. Christophe seldom saw them. His old wounds were apparently healed: but they

had been too deep wholly to be cured. He was fearful of forming new ties with men. It was something for this reason that he liked to dwell in a country where it was easy to live apart, a stranger amid a throng of strangers. For the rest he rarely stayed long in any one place; often he changed his lair: he was like an old migratory bird which needs space, and has its country in the air. . . . *"Mein Reich ist in der Luft."*

An evening in summer.

He was walking in the mountains above a village. He was striding along with his hat in his hand, up a winding road. He came to a neck where the road took a double turn, and passed into shadow between two slopes; on either side were nut-trees and pines. It was like a little shut-in world. On either hand the road seemed to come to an end, cut off at the edge of the void. Beyond were blue distance and the gleaming air. The peace of evening came down like a gentle rain.

They came together each at the same moment turning the bend at either end of the neck. She was dressed in black, and stood out against the clear sky: behind her were two children, a boy and a girl, between six and eight, who were playing and picking flowers. They recognized each other at a distance of a few yards. Their emotion was visible in their eyes; but neither brought it into words; each gave only an imperceptible movement. He was deeply moved: she . . . her lips trembled a little. They stopped. Almost in a whisper:

"Grazia!"

"You here!"

They held out their hands and stood without a word. Grazia was the first to make an effort to break the silence. She told him where she lived, and asked him where he was staying. Question and answer were mechanical, and they hardly listened, heard later, when their hands had parted: they were absorbed in gazing at each other. The children came back to her. She introduced them. He felt hostile towards them, and looked at them with no kindness, and said nothing: he was engrossed with her, occupied only in studying her beautiful face that bore some marks of suffering and age. She was embarrassed by his gaze, and said:

"Will you come, this evening?"

And she gave the name of her hotel.

He asked her where her husband was. She pointed to her black dress. He was too much moved to say more, and left her awkwardly. But when he had taken a few strides he came back to the children, who were picking strawberries, and took them roughly in his arms and kissed them, and went away.

In the evening he went to the hotel, and found her on the veranda, with the blinds drawn. They sat apart. There were very few people about, only two or three old people. Christophe was irritated by their presence. Grazia looked at him, and he looked at her, and murmured her name over and over again.

"Don't you think I have changed?" she asked.

His heart grew big.

"You have suffered," he said.

"You too," she answered pityingly, scanning the deep marks of agony and passion in his face.

They were at a loss for words.

"Please," he said, a moment later, "let us go somewhere else. Could we not find somewhere to be alone and talk?"

"No, my dear. Let us stay here. It is good enough here. No one is heeding us at all."

"I cannot talk freely here."

"That is all the better."

He could not understand why. Later, when in memory he went over their conversation, he thought she had not trusted him. But she was instinctively afraid of emotional scenes: unconsciously she was seeking protection from any surprise of their hearts: the very awkwardness of their intimacy in a public room, so sheltering the modesty of her secret emotions, was dear to her.

In whispers, with long intervals of silence, they sketched their lives in outline. Count Berény had been killed in a duel a few months ago; and Christophe saw that she had not been very happy with him. Also, she had lost a child, her first-born. She made no complaint, and turned the conversation from herself to question Christophe, and, as he told her of his tribulations, she showed the most affectionate compassion. Bells rang. It was Sunday evening. Life stood still.

She asked him to come again next day but one. He was hurt that she should be so little eager to see him again. In his heart happiness and sorrow were mingled.

Next day, on some pretext, she wrote and asked him to come. He was delighted with her little note. This time she received him in her private room. She was with her two children. He looked at them, still a little uneasily, but very tenderly. He thought the little girl—the elder of the two—very like her mother: but he did not try to match the boy's looks. They talked about the country, the times, the books lying open on the table:—but their eyes spoke of other things. He was hoping to be able to talk more intimately when a hotel acquaintance came in. He marked the pleasure and politeness with which Grazia received the stranger: she seemed to make no difference between her two visitors. He was hurt by it, but could not be angry with her. She proposed that they should all go for a walk and he accepted; the presence of the other woman, though she was young and charming, paralyzed him: his day was spoiled.

He did not see Grazia again for two days. During that time he lived but for the hours he was to spend with her.—Once more his efforts to speak to her were doomed to failure. While she was very gentle and kind with him, she could not throw off her reserve. All unconsciously Christophe added to her difficulty by his outbursts of German sentimentality, which embarrassed her and forced her instinct into reaction.

He wrote her a letter which touched her, saying that life was so short! Their lives were already so far gone! Perhaps they would have only a very little time in which to see each other, and it was pitiful, almost criminal, not to employ it in frank converse.

She replied with a few affectionate words, begging him to excuse her for her distrust, which she could not avoid, since she had been so much hurt by life: she could not break her habitual reserve: any excessive display, even of a genuine feeling, hurt and terrified her. But well she knew the worth of the friendship that had come to her once more: and she was as glad of it as he. She asked him to dine with her that evening.

His heart was brimming with gratitude. In his room, lying

on his bed, he sobbed. It was the opening of the flood-gates of ten years of solitude: for, since Olivier's death, he had been utterly alone. Her letter gave the word of resurrection to his heart that was so famished for tenderness. Tenderness! . . . He thought he had put it from him: he had been forced to learn how to do without it! Now he felt how sorely he needed it, and the great stores of love that had accumulated in him. . . .

It was a sweet and blessed evening that they spent together. . . . He could only speak to her of trivial subjects, in spite of their intention to hide nothing from each other. But what goodly things he told her through the piano, which with her eyes she invited him to use to tell her what he had to say! She was struck by the humility of the man whom she had known in his violence and pride. When he went away the silent pressure of their hands told them that they had found each other, and would never lose what they had regained.—It was raining, and there was not a breath of wind. His heart was singing.

She was only able to stay a few days longer, and she did not postpone her departure for an hour. He dared not ask her to do so, nor complain. On their last day they went for a walk with the children; there came a moment when he was so full of love and happiness that he tried to tell her so: but, with a very gentle gesture, she stopped him and smiled:

"Hush! I feel everything that you could say."

They sat down at the turn of the road where they had met. Still smiling she looked down into the valley below: but it was not the valley that she saw. He looked at the gentle face marked with the traces of bitter suffering: a few white tresses showed in her thick black hair. He was filled with a pitying, passionate adoration of this beloved creature who had travailed and been impregnated with the suffering of the soul. In every one of the marks of time upon her the soul was visible.—And, in a low, trembling voice, he craved, as a precious favor, which she granted him, a white hair from her head.

She went away. He could not understand why she would not have him accompany her. He had no doubt of her feeling for him, but her reserve disconcerted him. He could not stay

alone in that place, and set out in another direction. He tried to occupy his mind with traveling and work. He wrote to Grazia. She answered him, two or three week later, with very brief letters, in which she showed her tranquil friendship, knowing neither impatience nor uneasiness. They hurt him and he loved them. He would not admit that he had any right to reproach her; their affection was too recent, too recently renewed. He was fearful of losing it. And yet every letter he had from her breathed a calm loyalty which should have made him feel secure. But she was so different from him! . . .

They had agreed to meet in Rome, towards the end of the autumn. Without the thought of seeing her, the journey would have had little charm for Christophe. His long isolation had made him retiring: he had no taste for that futile hurrying from place to place which is so dear to the indolence of modern men and women. He was fearful of a change of habit, which is dangerous to the regular work of the mind. Besides, Italy had no attractions for him. He knew it only in the villainous music of the Verists and the tenor arias to which every now and then the land of Virgil inspires men of letters on their travels. He felt towards Italy the hostility of an advanced artist, who has too often heard the name of Rome invoked by the worst champions of academic routine. Finally, the old leaven of instinctive antipathy which ever lies fermenting in the hearts of the men of the North towards the men of the South, or at least towards the legendary type of rhetorical braggart which, in the eyes of the men of the North, represents the men of the South. At the mere thought of it Christophe disdainfully curled his lip. . . . No, he had no desire for the more acquaintance of the musicless people—(for, in the music of modern Europe, what is the place of their mandolin tinkling and melodramatic posturing declamation?).—And yet Grazia belonged to this people. To join her again, whither and by what devious ways would Christophe not have gone? He would win through by shutting his eyes until he came to her.

He was used to shutting his eyes. For so many years the shutters of his soul had been closed upon his inward life. Now, in this late autumn, it was more necessary than ever. For

three weeks together it had rained incessantly. Then a gray pall of impenetrable mists had hung over the valleys and towns of Switzerland, dripping and wet. His eyes had forgotten the sunlight. To rediscover in himself its concentrated energy he had to begin by clothing himself in night, and, with his eyes closed, to descend to the depths of the mine, the subterranean galleries of his dreams. There in the seams of coal slept the sun of days gone by. But as the result of spending his life crouching there, digging, he came out burned, stiff in back and knees, with limbs deformed, half petrified, dazed eyes, that, like a bird's, could see keenly in the night. Many a time Christophe had brought up from the mine the fire he had so painfully extracted to warm the chill of heart. But the dreams of the North smack of the warmth of the fireside and the closed room. No man notices it while he lives in it: dear is that heavy air, dear the half-light and the soul's dreams in the drowsy head. We love the things we have. We must be satisfied with them! . . .

When, as he passed the barrier of the Alps, Christophe, dozing in a corner of the carriage, saw the stainless sky and the limpid light falling upon the slopes of the mountains, he thought he must be dreaming. On the other side of the wall he had left a darkened sky and a fading day. So sudden was the change that at first he felt more surprise than joy. It was some time before his drowsy soul awoke and began slowly to expand and burst the crust that was upon it, and his heart could free itself from the shadows of the past. But as the day wore on, the mellow light took his soul into its arms, and, wholly forgetting all that had been, he drank greedily of the delight of seeing.

Through the plains of Milan. The eye of day mirrored in the blue canals, a network of veins through the downy ricefields. Mountains of Vinci, snowy Alps soft in their brilliance, ruggedly encircling the horizon, fringed with red and orange and greeny gold and pale blue. Evening falling on the Apennines. A winding descent by little sheer hills, snakelike curving, in a repeating, involved rhythm like a farandole.—And suddenly, at the bottom of the slope, like a kiss, the breath of the sea and the smell of orange-trees. The sea, the Latin sea and its opal

light, whereon, swaying, were the sails of little boats like wings folded back. . . .

By the sea, at a fishing-village, the train stopped for a while. It was explained to the passengers that there had been a landslip, as a result of the heavy rains, in a tunnel between Genoa and Pisa: all the trains were several hours late. Christophe, who was booked through to Rome, was delighted by the accident which provoked the loud lamentations of his fellow-passengers. He jumped down to the platform and made use of the stoppage to go down to the sea, which drew him on and on. The sea charmed him so that when, a few hours later, the engine whistled as it moved on, Christophe was in a boat, and, as the train passed, shouted: "Good-by!" In the luminous night, on the luminous sea, he sat rocking in the boat, as it passed along the scented coast with its promontories fringed with tiny cypress-trees. He put up at a village and spent there five days of unbroken joy. He was like a man issuing from a long fast, hungrily eating. With all his famished senses he gulped down the splendid light. . . . Light, the blood of the world, that flows in space like a river of life, and through our eyes, our lips, our nostrils, every pore of our skins, filters through to the depths of our bodies, light, more necessary to life than bread,—he who sees thee stripped of thy northern veils, pure, burning, naked, marvels how ever he could have lived without knowing thee, and deeply feels that he can never live more without possessing thee. . . .

For five days Christophe was drunk with the sun. For five days he forgot—for the first time—that he was a musician. The music of his soul was merged into light. The air, the sea, the earth: the brilliant symphony played by the sun's orchestra. And with what innate art does Italy know how to use that orchestra! Other peoples paint from Nature: the Italians collaborate with her: they paint with sunlight. The music of color. All is music, everything sings. A wall by the roadside, red, fissured with gold: above it, two cypress-trees with their tufted crests: and all around the eager blue of the sky. A marble staircase, white, steep, narrow, climbing between pink walls against the blue front of a church. Any one of their many-colored houses, apricot, lemon, cedrate, shining among the

olive-trees, has the effect of a marvelous ripe fruit among the leaves. In Italy seeing is sensual: the eyes enjoy color, as the palate and the tongue delight in a juicy, scented fruit. Christophe flung himself at this new repast with eager childlike greed: he made up for the asceticism of the gray visions to which till then he had been condemned. His abounding nature, stifled by Fate, suddenly became conscious of powers of enjoyment which he had never used: they pounced on the prey presented to them; scents, colors, the music of voices, bells and the sea, the kisses of the air, the warm bath of light in which his ageing, weary soul began to expand. . . . Christophe had no thought of anything. He was in a state of beatific delight, and only left it to share his joy with those he met: his boatman, an old fisherman, with quick eyes all wrinkled round, who wore a red cap like that of a Venetian senator;—his only fellow-boarder, a Milanese, who ate macaroni and rolled his eyes like Othello: fierce black eyes filled with a furious hatred; an apathetic, sleepy man;—the waiter in the restaurant, who, when he carried a tray, bent his neck, and twisted his arms and his body like an angel of Bernini;—the little Saint John, with sly, winking eyes, who begged on the road, and offered the passers-by an orange on a green branch. He would hail the carriage-drivers, sitting huddled on their seats, who every now and then would, in a nasal, droning, throaty voice, intone the thousand and one couplets. He was amazed to find himself humming *Cavalleria Rusticana*. He had entirely forgotten the end of his journey. Forgotten, too, was his haste to reach the end and Grazia. . . .

Forgotten altogether was she until the day when the beloved image rose before him. Was it called up by a face seen on the road or a grave, singing note in a voice? He did not know. But a time came when, from everything about him, from the circling, olive-clad hills, from the high, shining peaks of the Apennines, graven by the dense shadows and the burning sun, and from the orange-groves heavy with flowers and fruit, and the deep, heaving breath of the sea, there shone the smiling face of the beloved. Through the countless eyes of the air, her eyes were upon him. In that beloved earth she flowered, like a rose upon a rose-tree.

Then he regained possession of himself. He took the train

for Rome and never stopped. He had no interest in the old memories of Italy, or the cities of the art of past ages. He saw nothing of Rome, nor wanted to: and what he did see at first, in passing, the styleless new districts, the square blocks of buildings, gave him no desire to see more.

As soon as he arrived he went to see Grazia. She asked him:

"How did you come? Did you stop at Milan or Florence?"

"No," he said. "Why should I?"

She laughed.

"That's a fine thing to say! And what do you think of Rome?"

"Nothing," he said. "I haven't seen it!"

"Not yet?"

"Nothing. Not a single monument. I came straight to you from my hotel."

"You don't need to go far to see Rome. . . . Look at that wall opposite. . . . You only need to see its light."

"I only see you," he said.

"You are a barbarian. You only see your own ideas. When did you leave Switzerland?"

"A week ago."

"What have you been doing since then?"

"I don't know. I stopped, by chance, at a place by the sea. I never noticed its name. I slept for a week. Slept, with my eyes open. I do not know what I have seen, or what I have dreamed. I think I was dreaming of you. I know that it was very beautiful. But the most lovely part of it all is that I forgot everything. . . ."

"Thank you!" she said.

(He did not listen.)

". . . Everything," he went on. "Everything that was then, everything that had been before. I am a new man. I am beginning to live again."

"It is true," she said, looking into his laughing eyes. "You have changed since we last met."

He looked at her, too, and found her no less different from his memory of her. Not that she had changed in two months, but he was seeing her with new eyes. Yonder, in Switzerland, the image of old days, the faint shadow of the girl Grazia, had

flitted between his gaze and this new actual beloved. Now, in the sun of Italy, the dreams of the North had melted away: in the clear light of day he saw her real soul and body. How far removed she was from the little, wild, imprisoned girl of Paris, how far from the woman with the smile like Saint John, whom he had met one evening, shortly after her marriage, only to lose her again! Out of the little Umbrian Madonna had flowered a lovely Roman lady:

Color verus, corpus solidum et succi plenum.

Her figure had taken on an harmonious fullness: her body was bathed in a proud languor. The very genius of tranquillity hovered in her presence. She had that greed of sunny silence, and still contemplation, the delightful joy in the peace of living which the people of the North will never really know. What especially she had preserved out of the past was her great kindness which inspired all her other feelings. But in her luminous smile many new things were to be read: a melancholy indulgence, a little weariness, much knowledge of the ways of men, a fine irony, and tranquil common sense. The years had veiled her with a certain coldness, which protected her against the illusions of the heart; rarely could she surrender herself; and her tenderness was ever on the alert, with a smile that seemed to know and tell everything, against the passionate impulses that Christophe found it hard to suppress. She had her weaknesses, moments of abandonment to the caprice of the minute, a coquetry at which she herself mocked but never fought against. She was never in revolt against things, nor against herself: she had come to a gentle fatalism, and she was altogether kind, but a little weary.

She entertained a great deal, and—at least, in appearance—not very selectively: but as, for the most part, her intimates belonged to the same world, breathed the same atmosphere, had been fashioned by the same habits, they were homogeneous and harmonious enough, and very different from the polite assemblages that Christophe had known in France and Germany. The majority were of old Italian families, vivified here and there by foreign marriages; they all had a superficial cosmopolitanism and a comfortable mixture of the four chief languages, and the

intellectual baggage of the four great nations of the West. Each nation brought into the pool its personal characteristic, the Jews their restlessness and the Anglo-Saxons their phlegm, but everything was quickly absorbed in the Italian melting-pot. When centuries of great plundering barons have impressed on a race the haughty and rapacious profile of a bird of prey, the metal may change, but the imprint remains the same. Many of the faces that seemed the most pronouncedly Italian, with a Luini smile, or the voluptuous, calm gaze of a Titian, flowers of the Adriatic, or the plains of Lombardy, had blossomed on the shrubs of the North transplanted to the old Latin soil. Whatever colors be spread on the palette of Rome, the color which stands out is always Roman.

Christophe could not analyze his impressions, but he admired the perfume of an age-old culture, an ancient civilization exhaled by these people, who were often mediocre, and, in some cases, less than mediocre. It was a subtle perfume, springing from the smallest trifles. A graceful courtesy, a gentleness of manners that could be charming and affectionate, and at the same time malicious and consciously superior, an elegant finesse in the use of the eyes, the smile, the alert, nonchalant, skeptical, diverse, and easy intelligence. There was nothing either stiff or familiar. Nothing literary. Here there was no fear of meeting the psychologues of a Parisian drawing-room, ensconced behind their eyeglasses, or the corporalism of a German pedant. They were men, quite simply, and very human men, such as were the friends of Terence and Scipio the Æmilian. . . .

Homo sum. . . .

It was fine to see. It was a life more of appearance than reality. Beneath it lay an incurable frivolity which is common to the polite society of every country. But what made this society characteristic of its race was its indolence. The frivolity of the French is accompanied by a fever of the nerves—a perpetual agitation of the mind, even when it is empty. The brain of the Italian knows how to rest. It knows it only too well. It is sweet to sleep in the warm shadows, on the soft pillow of a padded Epicureanism, and a very supple, fairly curious, and, at bottom, prodigiously indifferent intelligence.

All the men of this society were entirely lacking in decided

opinions. They dabbled in politics and art in the same dilettante fashion. Among them were charming natures, handsome, fine-featured patrician, Italian faces, with soft, intelligent eyes, men with gentle, quiet manners, who, with exquisite taste and affectionate hearts, loved Nature, the old masters, flowers, women, books, good food, their country, music. . . . They loved everything. They preferred nothing. Sometimes one felt that they loved nothing. Love played so large a part in their lives, but only on condition that it never disturbed them. Their love was indolent and lazy, like themselves; even in their passion it was apt to take on a domestic character. Their solid, harmonious intelligence was fitted with an inertia in which all the opposites of thought met without collision, were tranquilly yoked together, smiling, cushioned, and rendered harmless. They were afraid of any thorough belief, of taking sides, and were at their ease in semi-solutions and half-thoughts. They were conservative-liberal in temper of mind. They needed politics and art half-way up the hill, like those health resorts where there is no danger of asthma or palpitations. They recognized themselves in the lazy plays of Goldoni, or the equally diffused light of Manzoni. Their amiable indifference was never disturbed. Never could they have said like their great ancestors: "*Primum vivere . . .*" but rather "*Dapprima, quieto vivere.*"

To live in peace. That was the secret vow, the aim of even the most energetic of those who controlled politics. A little Machiavelli, master of himself and others, with a heart as cold as his head, a lucid, bored intelligence, knowing how and daring to use all means to gain his ends, ready to sacrifice all his friends to his ambition, would be capable of sacrificing his ambition to one thing only: his *quieto vivere*. They needed long periods of absolute lassitude. When they issued from them, as from a good sleep, they were fresh and ready: these grave men, these tranquil Madonnas would be taken with a sudden desire to talk, to be gay, to plunge into social life; then they would break out into a profusion of gestures and words, paradoxical sallies, burlesque humor: they were always playing an *opéra bouffe*. In that gallery of Italian portraits rarely would you find the marks of thought, the metallic brilliance of the eyes, faces stained with the perpetual labor of the mind, such

as are to be found in the North. And yet, here, as elsewhere, there was no lack of souls turned in upon themselves, to feed upon themselves, concealing their woes, and desires and cares seething beneath the mask of indifference, and, voluptuously, drawing on a cloak of torpor. And, in certain faces there would peep out, queerly, disconcertingly, indications of some obscure malady of the spirit peculiar to very ancient races—like the excavations in the Roman Campagna.

There was great charm in the enigmatic indifference of these people, and their calm, mocking eyes, wherein there slumbered hidden tragedy. But Christophe was in no humor to recognize it. He was furious at seeing Grazia surrounded by worldly people with their courteous, witty, and empty manners. He hated them for it, and he was angry with her. He sulked at her just as he sulked at Rome. His visits to her became less and less frequent, and he began to make up his mind to go.

He did not go. Unknown to himself, he was beginning to feel the attraction of Italian society, though it irritated him so much.

For the time being, he isolated himself and lounged about Rome and the environment. The Roman light, the hanging gardens, the Campagna, encircled, as by a golden scarf, by the sunlit sea, little by little delivered up to him the secret of the enchanted land. He had sworn not to move a step to see the monuments of the dead, which he affected to despise: he used grumblingly to declare that he would wait until they came to look for him. They came; he happened on them by chance on his rambling through the City of many hills. Without having looked for it, he saw the Forum red under the setting sun, and the half-ruined arches of the Palatine and behind them the deep azure vault of heaven, a gulf of blue light. He wandered in the vast Campagna, near the ruddy Tiber, thick with mud, like moving earth,—and along the ruined aqueducts, like the gigantic vertebræ of antediluvian monsters. Thick masses of black clouds rolled across the blue sky. Peasants on horseback goaded across the desert great herds of pearly-gray cattle with long horns; and along the ancient road, straight, dusty, and bare, goat-footed shepherds, clad in thick skins,

walked in silence. On the far horizon, the Sabine Chain, with its Olympian lines, unfolded its hills; and on the other edge of the cup of the sky the old walls of the city, the front of Saint John's Church, surmounted with statues which danced in black silhouette. . . . Silence. . . . A fiery sun. . . . The wind passed over the plain. . . . On a headless, armless statue, almost inundated by the waving grass, a lizard, with its heart beating tranquilly, lay motionless, absorbed, drinking in its fill of light. And Christophe, with his head buzzing with the sunshine (sometimes also with the *Castelli* wine), sitting on the black earth near the broken statue, smiling, sleepy, lost in forgetfulness, breathed in the calm, tremendous force of Rome.—Until nightfall.—Then, with his heart full of a sudden anguish, he fled from the gloomy solitude in which the tragic light was sinking. . . . O earth, burning earth, earth passionate and dumb! Beneath thy fevered peace I still can hear the trumpeting of the legions. What a fury of life is shining in thy bosom! What a mighty desire for an awakening!

Christophe found men in whose souls there burned brands of the age-old fire. Beneath the rust of the dead they had been preserved. It might be thought that the fire had died down with the closing of Mazzini's eyes. It was springing to life again. It was the same. Very few wished to see it. It troubled the quiet of those who were asleep. It gave a clear and brutal light. Those who bore it aloft.—young men (the eldest was not thirty-five), a little band of the elect come from every point of the horizon, men of free intellect who were all different in temperament, education, opinions, and faith—were all united in worship of this flame of the new life. The etiquette of parties, systems of thought, mattered not to them: the great thing was to "think with courage." To be frank, to be brave, in mind and deed. Rudely they disturbed the sleep of their race. After the political resurrection of Italy, awakened from death by the summons of her heroes, after her recent economic resurrection, they had set themselves to pluck Italian thought from the grave. They suffered, as from an insult, from the indolent and timid indifference of the elect, their cowardice of mind and verbolatry. Their *Voices* rang hollow in the midst of rhetoric and the moral slavery which for centuries had been

gathering into a crust upon the soul of their country. They breathed into it their merciless realism and their uncompromising loyalty. Though upon occasion they were capable of sacrificing their own personal intellectual preferences to the duty of discipline which national life imposes on the individual, yet they reserved their highest altar and their purest ardor for the truth. They loved truth with fiery, pious hearts. Insulted by his adversaries, defamed, threatened, one of the leaders of these young men replied, with grand, calm dignity:

"Respect the truth. I speak to you now, from my heart, with no shade of bitterness. I forget the ill I have received at your hands and the evil that I may have done you. Be true. There is no conscience, there is no noble life, there is no capacity for sacrifice where there is not a religious, a rigid, and a rigorous respect for truth. Strive, then, to fulfil this difficult duty. Untruth corrupts whoever makes use of it before it overcomes him against whom it is used. What does it matter that you gain an immediate success? The roots of your soul will remain withered in the air above the soil that is crumbled away with untruth. We are on a plane superior to our disagreements, even though on your lips your passion brings the name of our country. There is one thing greater than a man's country, and that is the human conscience. There are laws which you must not violate on pain of being bad Italians. You see before you now only a man who is a seeker after truth: you must hear his cry. You have before you now only a man who ardently desires to see you great and pure, and to work with you. For, whether you will or no, we all work in common with all those who in this world work truthfully. That which comes out of our labors (and we cannot foresee what it will be) will bear our common mark, the mark of us all, if we have labored with truth. The essence of man lies in this, in his marvelous faculty for seeking truth, seeing it, loving it, and sacrificing himself to it.—Truth, that over all who possess it spends the magic breath of its puissant health! . . ." *

The first time Christophe heard these words they seemed to him like an echo of his own voice: and he felt that these men

*The hymn to Truth here introduced is an abridgment of an article by Giuseppe Prezzolini (*La Voce*, April 13, 1911).

and he were brothers. The chances of the conflict of the nations and ideas might one day fling them into the position of adversaries in the mêlée; but, friends or enemies, they were, and would always be, members of the same human family. They knew it, even as he. They knew it, before he did. They knew him before he knew them, for they had been friends of Olivier's. Christophe discovered that his friend's writings—(a few volumes of verse and critical essays)—which had only been read by a very few in Paris, had been translated by these Italians, and were as familiar to them as to himself.

Later on he was to discover the impassable distance which divided these men from Olivier. In their way of judging others they were entirely Italian, incapable of the effort necessary to see beyond themselves, rooted in the ideas of their race. At bottom, in all good faith, in foreign literature they only sought what their national instinct was willing to find in it; often they only took out of it what they themselves had unconsciously read into it. Mediocre as critics, and as psychologists contemptible, they were too single-minded, too full of themselves and their passions, even when they were the most enamored of truth. Italian idealism cannot forget itself: it is not interested in the impersonal dreams of the North; it leads everything back to itself, its desires, its pride of race, and transfigures them. Consciously or unconsciously, it is always toiling for the *terza Roma*. It must be said that for many centuries it has not taken much trouble to realize it. These splendid Italians, who are cut out for action, only act through passion, and soon weary of it: but when the breath of passion rushes in their veins it raises them higher than all other nations; as has been seen, for example, in their *Risorgimento*.—Some such great wind as that had begun to pass over the young men of Italy of all parties: nationalists, socialists, neo-Catholics, free idealists, all the unyielding Italians, all, in hope and will, citizens of Imperial Rome, Queen of the universe.

At first Christophe saw only their generous ardor and the common antipathies which united him and them. They could not but join with him in their contempt for the fashionable society, against which Christophe raged on account of Grazia's preferences. More than he they hated the spirit of prudence,

the apathy, the compromise, and buffoonery, the things half said, the amphibious thoughts, the subtle dawdling of the mind between all possibilities, without deciding on any one, the fine phrases, the sweetness of it all. They were all self-taught men who had pieced themselves together with everything they could lay their hands on, but had had neither means nor leisure to put the finishing touch to their work, and they were prone to exaggerate their natural coarseness and their rather bitter tone fitting to rough *contadini.* They wished to provoke active hostility. Anything rather than indifference. In order to rouse the energy of their race they would gladly have consented to be among the first victims to it.

Meanwhile they were not liked, and they did nothing to gain liking. Christophe met with but small success when he tried to talk to Grazia of his new friends. They were repugnant to her order-loving, peace-loving nature. He had to recognize when he was with her that they had a way of upholding the best of causes which sometimes provoked a desire in the best of people to declare themselves hostile to it. They were ironical and aggressive, in criticism harsh to the point of insult, even with people whom they had no desire to hurt. Having reached the sphere of publication before they had come to maturity, they passed with equal intolerance from one infatuation to another. Passionately sincere, giving themselves unreservedly, without stint or thought of economy, they were consumed by their excessive intellectuality, their precocious and blindly obstinate endeavors. It is not well for young ideas, hardly out of the pod, to be exposed to the raw sunlight. The soul is scorched by it. Nothing is made fruitful save with time and silence. Time and silence these men had not allowed themselves. It is the misfortune of only too many Italian talents. Violent, hasty action is an intoxicant. The mind that has once tasted it is hard put to it to break the habit; and its normal growth is then in great peril of being forced and forever twisted.

Christophe appreciated the acid freshness of such green frankness in contrast with the insipidity of the people who frequented the middle way, the *via di mezzo,* who are in perpetual fear of being compromised, and have a subtle talent for saying neither "Yes" nor "No." But very soon he came to see that such

people also, with their calm, courteous minds, have their worth. The perpetual state of conflict in which his new friends lived was very tiring. Christophe began by thinking it his duty to go to Grazia's house to defend them. Sometimes he went there to forget them. No doubt he was like them, too much like them. They were now what he had been twenty years ago. And life never goes back. At heart Christophe well knew that, for his own part, he had forever said good-by to such violence, and that he was going towards peace, whose secret seemed to lie for him in Grazia's eyes. Why, then, was he in revolt against her? . . . Ah! In the egoism of his love he longed to be the only one to enjoy her peace. He could not bear Grazia to dispense its benefits without marking how to all comers she extended the same prodigally gracious welcome.

She read his thoughts, and, with her charming frankness, she said to him one day:

"You are angry with me for being what I am? You must not idealize me, my dear. I am a woman, and no better than another. I don't go out of my way for society; but I admit that I like it, just as I like going sometimes to an indifferent play, or reading foolish books, which you despise, though I find them soothing and amusing. I cannot refuse anything."

"How can you endure these idiots?"

"Life has taught me not to be too nice. One must not ask too much. It is a good deal, I assure you, when one finds honest people, with no harm in them, kindly people . . . (naturally, of course, supposing one expects nothing of them; I know perfectly well that if I had need of them, I should not find many to help me . . .). And yet they are fond of me, and when I find a little real affection, I hold the rest cheap. You are angry with me? Forgive me for being an ordinary person. I can at least see the difference between what is best and what is not so good in myself. And what you have is the best."

"I want everything," he said gloweringly.

However, he felt that what she said was true. He was so

sure of her affection that, after long hesitation, over many weeks, he asked her one day:

"Will you ever . . .?"

"What is it?"

"Be mine."

He went on:

". . . and I yours."

She smiled:

"But you are mine, my dear."

"You know what I mean."

She was a little unhappy: but she took his hands and looked at him frankly:

"No, my dear," she said tenderly.

He could not speak. She saw that he was hurt.

"Forgive me. I have hurt you. I knew that you would say that to me. We must speak out frankly and in all truth, like good friends."

"Friends," he said sadly. "Nothing more?"

"You are ungrateful. What more do you want? To marry me? . . . Do you remember the old days when you had eyes only for my pretty cousin? I was sad then because you would not understand what I felt for you. Our whole lives might have been changed. Now I think it was better as it has been; it is better that we should never expose our friendship to the test of common life, the daily life, in which even the purest must be debased. . . ."

"You say that because you love me less."

"Oh no! I love you just the same."

"Ah! That is the first time you have told me."

"There must be nothing hidden from us now. You see, I have not much faith in marriage left. Mine, I know, was not a very good example. But I have thought and looked about me. Happy marriages are very rare. It is a little against nature. You cannot bind together the wills of two people without mutilating one of them, if not both, and it does not even bring the suffering through which it is well and profitable for the soul to pass."

"Ah!" he said. "But I can see in it a fine thing—the union of two sacrifices, two souls merged into one."

"A fine thing, in your dreams. In reality you would suffer more than any one."

"What! You think I could never have a wife, a family, children? . . . Don't say that! I should love them so! You think it impossible for me to have that happiness?"

"I don't know. I don't think so. Perhaps with a good woman, not very intelligent, not very beautiful, who would be devoted to you, and would not understand you."

"How unkind of you! . . . But you are wrong to make fun of it. A good woman is a fine thing, even if she has no mind."

"I agree. Shall I find you one?"

"Please! No. You are hurting me. How can you talk like that?"

"What have I said?"

"You don't love me at all, not at all. You can't if you can think of my marrying another woman."

"On the contrary, it is because I love you that I should be happy to do anything which could make you happy."

"Then, if that is true . . ."

"No, no. Don't go back to that. I tell you, it would make you miserable."

"Don't worry about me. I swear to you that I shall be happy! Speak the truth: do you think that you would be unhappy with me?"

"Oh! Unhappy? No, my dear. I respect and admire you too much ever to be unhappy with you. . . . But, I will tell you: I don't think anything could make me very unhappy now. I have seen too much. I have become philosophical. . . . But, frankly—(You want me to? You won't be angry?)—well. I know my own weakness. I should, perhaps, be foolish enough, after a few months, not to be perfectly happy with you; and I will not have that, just because my affection for you is the most holy thing in the world, and I will not have it tarnished."

Sadly, he said:

"Yes, you say that, to sweeten the pill. You don't like me. There are things in me which are odious to you."

"No, no. I assure you. Don't look so hang-dog. You are the dearest, kindest man. . . ."

"Then I don't understand. Why couldn't we agree?"

"Because we are too different—both too decided, too individual."

"That is why I love you."

"I too. But that is why we should find ourselves conflicting."

"No."

"Yes. Or, rather, as I know that you are bigger than I, I should reproach myself with embarrassing you with my smaller personality, and then I should be stifled. I should say nothing, and I should suffer."

Tears came to Christophe's eyes.

"Oh! I won't have that. Never! I would rather be utterly miserable than have you suffering through my fault, for my sake."

"My dear, you mustn't feel it like that. . . . You know, I say all that, but I may be flattering myself. . . . Perhaps I should not be so good as to sacrifice myself for you."

"All the better."

"But, then, I should sacrifice you, and that would be misery for me. . . . You see, there is no solving the difficulty either way. Let us stay as we are. Could there be anything better than our friendship?"

He nodded his head and smiled a little bitterly.

"Yes. That is all very well. But at bottom you don't love me enough."

She smiled too, gently, with a little melancholy, and said, with a sigh:

"Perhaps. You are right. I am no longer young. I am tired. Life wears one out unless one is very strong, like you. . . . Oh! you, there are times when I look at you and you seem to be a boy of eighteen."

"Alas! With my old face, my wrinkles, my dull skin!"

"I know that you have suffered as much as I—perhaps more. I can see that. But sometimes you look at me with the eyes of a boy, and I feel you giving out a fresh stream of life. I am worn out. When I think of my old eagerness, then—alas! As some one said, 'Those were great days. I was very unhappy!'

I hold to life only by a thread. I should never be bold enough to try marriage again. Ah! Then! Then! . . . If you had only given a sign! . . ."

"Well, then, well, tell me . . ."

"No. It is not worth the trouble."

"Then, if in the old days, if I had . . ."

"Yes. If you had . . . ? I said nothing."

"I understood. You are cruel."

"Take it, then, that in the old days I was a fool."

"You are making it worse and worse."

"Poor Christophe! I can't say a word but it hurts you. I shan't say any more."

"You must. . . . Tell me. . . . Tell me something."

"Something?"

"Something kind."

She laughed.

"Don't laugh."

"Then you must not be sad."

"How can I be anything else?"

"You have no reason to be sad, I assure you."

"Why?"

"Because you have a friend who loves you."

"Truly?"

"If I tell you so, won't you believe me?"

"Tell me, then."

"You won't be sad any longer? You won't be insatiable? You will be content with our dear friendship?"

"I must."

"Oh! Ungrateful! And you say you love me? Really, I think I love you better than you love me."

"Ah! If it were possible."

He said that with such an outburst of lover's egoism that she laughed. He too. He insisted:

"Tell me! . . ."

For a moment she was silent, looking at him, then suddenly she brought her face close to Christophe's and kissed him. It was so unexpected! His heart leaped within him. He tried to take her in his arms. But she had escaped. At the door

of the little room she laid her finger on her lips.—"Hush!"—and disappeared.

From that moment on he did not again speak to her of his love, and he was less awkward in his relation with her. Their alternations of strained silence and ill-suppressed violence were succeeded by a simple restful intimacy. That is the advantage of frankness in friendship. No more hidden meanings, no more illusions, no more fears. Each knew the other's innermost thoughts. Now when Christophe was with Grazia in the company of strangers who irritated him and he lost patience at hearing her exchange with them the empty remarks usual in polite society, she would notice it and look at him and smile. It was enough to let him know that they were together, and he would find his peace restored.

The presence of the beloved robs the imagination of its poisoned dart: the fever of desire is cooled: the soul becomes absorbed in the chaste possession of the loved presence.—Besides, Grazia shed on all about her the silent charm of her harmonious nature. Any exaggeration of voice or gesture, even if it were involuntary, wounded her, as a thing that was not simple and beautiful. In this way she influenced Christophe little by little. Though at first he tugged at the bridle put upon his eagerness, he slowly gained the mastery of himself, and he was all the stronger since his force was not wasted in useless violence.

Their souls met and mingled. Grazia, who had smilingly surrendered to the sweetness of living, was awaked from her slumber by contact with Christophe's moral energy. She took a more direct and less passive interest in the things of the mind. She used to read very little, preferring to browse indolently over the same old books, but now she began to be curious about new ideas, and soon came to feel their attraction. The wealth of the world of modern ideas, which was not unknown to her though she had never cared to adventure in it alone, no longer frightened her now that she had a companion and guide. Insensibly she suffered herself, while she protested against it, to be drawn on to an understanding of the young Italians, whose ardent iconoclasm had always been distasteful to her.

But Christophe profited the more by this mutual perception. It has often been observed in love that the weaker of the two gives the most: it is not that the other loves less, but, being stronger, must take more. So Christophe had already been enriched by Olivier's mind. But this new mystic marriage was far more fruitful; for Grazia brought him for her dowry the rarest treasure, that Olivier had never possessed—joy. The joy of the soul and of the eyes. Light. The smile of the Latin sky, that loves the ugliness of the humblest things, and sets the stones of the old walls flowering, and endows even sadness with its calm radiance.

The budding spring entered into alliance with her. The dream of new life was teeming in the warmth of the slumbering air. The young green was wedding with the silver-gray of the olive-trees. Beneath the dark red arches of the ruined aqueducts flowered the white almond-trees. In the awakening Campagna waved the seas of grass and the triumphant flames of the poppies. Down the lawns of the villas flowed streams of purple anemones and sheets of violets. The glycine clambered up the umbrella-shaped pines, and the wind blowing over the city brought the scent of the roses of the Palatine.

They went for walks together. When she was able to shake off the almost Oriental torpor, in which for hours together she would muse, she became another creature: she loved walking; she was tall, with a fine length of leg, and a strong, supple figure, and she looked like a Diana of Primatice.—Most often they would go to one of the villas, left like flotsam from the shipwreck of the Splendid Rome of the *setticento* under the assault of the flood of the Piedmontese barbarians. They preferred, above all, the Villa Mattei, that promontory of ancient Rome, beneath which the last waves of the deserted Campagna sink and die. They used to go down the avenue of oaks that, with its deep vault, frames the blue, the pleasant chains of the Alban hills, softly swelling like a beating heart. Along the path through the leaves they could see the tombs of Roman husbands and wives, lying sadly there, with hands clasped in fidelity. They used to sit down at the end of the avenue, under an arbor of roses against a white sarcophagus. Behind them the desert. Profound peace. The murmuring of a slow-drop-

ping fountain, trickling languidly, so languidly that it seemed on the point of dying. They would talk in whispers. Grazia's eyes would trustfully gaze into the eyes of her friend. Christophe would tell her of his life, his struggles, his past sorrows; and there was no more sadness in them. In her presence, with her eyes upon him, everything was simple, everything seemed inevitable. . . . She, in her turn, would tell of her life. He hardly heard what she said, but none of her thoughts were lost upon him. His soul and hers were wedded. He saw with her eyes. Everywhere he saw her eyes, her tranquil eyes, in the depths of which there burned an ardent fire; he saw them in the fair, mutilated faces of the antique statues and in the riddle of their silent gaze: he saw them in the sky of Rome, loverly laughing around the matted crests of the cypress-trees and through the fingers of the *lecci,* black, shining, riddled with the sun's arrows.

Through Grazia's eyes the meaning of Latin art reached his heart. Till then Christophe had been entirely indifferent to the work of the Italians. The barbarian idealist, the great bear from the German forests, had not yet learned to taste the delicious savor of the lovely gilded marbles, golden as honey. The antiques of the Vatican were frankly repulsive to him. He was disgusted by their stupid faces, their effeminate or massive proportions, their banal, rounded modeling, all the Gitons and gladiators. Hardly more than a few portrait-statues found favor in his sight, and the originals had absolutely no interest for him. He was no more kindly towards the pale, grimacing Florentines and their sick Madonnas and pre-Raphaelite Venuses, anæmic, consumptive, affected, and tormented. And the bestial stupidity of the red, sweating bullies and athletes let loose upon the world by the example of the Sistine Chapel made him think of cast-iron. Only for Michael Angelo did he have a secret feeling of pious sympathy with his tragic sufferings, his divine contempt, and the loftiness of his chaste passions. With a pure barbaric love, like that of the master, he loved the religious nudity of his youths, his shy, wild virgins, like wild creatures caught in a trap, the sorrowful Aurora, the wild-eyed Madonna, with her Child biting at her breast, and the lovely Lia, whom he would fain have had to wife. But in the soul

of the tormented hero he found nothing more than the echo of his own.

Grazia opened the gates of a new world of art for him. He entered into the sovereign serenity of Raphael and Titian. He saw the imperial splendor of the classic genius, which, like a lion, reigns over the universe of form conquered and mastered. The flashing vision of the great Venetian which goes straight to the heart of life, and with its lightning cleaves the hovering mists that veil it, the masterful might of these Latin minds that cannot only conquer, but also conquer themselves, and in victory impose upon themselves the straitest discipline, and, on the field of battle, have the art exactly to choose their rightful booty from among the spoils of the enemy overthrown—the Olympian portraits and the *stanze* of Raphael filled Christophe's heart with music richer than Wagner's, the music of serene lives, noble architecture, harmonious grouping, the music which shines forth from the perfect beauty of face, hands, feet, draperies, and gestures. Intelligence. Love. The stream of love which springs from those youthful souls and bodies. The might of the spirit and delight. Young tenderness, ironic wisdom, the warm obsessing odor of amorous bodies, the luminous smile in which the shadows are blotted out and passion slumbers. The quivering force of life rearing and reined in, like the horses of the Sun, by the sturdy hand of the master. . . .

And Christophe wondered:

"Is it impossible to unite, as they have done, the force and the peace of the Romans? Nowadays the best men aspire only to force or peace, one to the detriment of the other. Of all men the Italians seem most utterly to have lost the sense of harmony which Poussin, Lorraine, and Goethe understood. Must a stranger once more reveal to them its work? . . . And what man shall teach it to our musicians? Music has not yet had its Raphael. Mozart is only a child, a little German bourgeois, with feverish hands and sentimental soul, who uses too many words, too many gestures, and chatters and weeps and laughs over nothing. And neither the Gothic Bach nor the Prometheus of Bonn, struggling with the vulture, nor his offspring of Titans piling Pelion on Ossa, and hurling imprecations at the Heavens, have ever seen the smile of God. . . ."

After he had seen it, Christophe was ashamed of his own music; his vain agitation, his turgid passions, his indiscreet exclamations, his parade of himself, his lack of moderation, seemed to him both pitiable and shameful. A flock of sheep without a shepherd, a kingdom without a king.—A man must be the king of his tumultuous soul. . . .

During these months Christophe seemed to have forgotten music. He hardly wrote at all, feeling no need for it. His mind, fertilized by Rome, was in a period of gestation. He spent days together in a dreamy state of semi-intoxication. Nature, like himself, was in the early spring-time, when the languor of the awakening is mixed with a voluptuous dizziness. Nature and he lay dreaming, locked in each other's arms, like lovers embracing in their sleep. The feverish enigma of the Campagna was no longer hostile and disturbing to him; he had made himself master of its tragic beauty; in his arms he held Demeter, sleeping.

During April he received an invitation from Paris to go there and conduct a series of concerts. Without troubling to think it over, he decided to refuse, but thought it better to mention it to Grazia. It was very sweet to him to consult her about his life, for it gave him the illusion that she shared it.

This time she gave him a shock of disillusion. She made him explain the whole matter to her, and advised him to accept. He was very hurt, and saw in her advice the proof of her indifference.

Probably Grazia was sorry to give him such advice. But why did Christophe ask her for it? The more he turned to her and asked her to decide for him, the more she thought herself responsible for her friend's actions. As a result of their interchange of ideas she had gained from Christophe a little of his will-power: he had revealed to her duty and the beauty of action. At least she had recognized duty as far as her friend was concerned, and she would not have him fail in it. Better than he, she knew the power of languor given off by the Italian soil, which, like the insidious poison of its warm *scirocco,* creeps into the veins and sends the will to sleep. How

often had she not felt its maleficent charm, and had no power to resist it! All her friends were more or less tainted by this malaria of the soul. Stronger men than they had in old days fallen victim to it: it had rusted away the brass of the Roman she-wolf. Rome breathes forth death: it is too full of graves. It is healthier to stay there for a little time than to live there. Too easily does one slip out of one's own time, a dangerous taste for the still young forces that have a vast duty to accomplish. Grazia saw clearly that the society about her had not a life-giving air for an artist. And although she had more friendship for Christophe than for any other . . . (dared she confess it?) . . . she was not, at heart, sorry for him to go. Alas! He wearied her with the very qualities that she most loved in him, his overflowing intelligence, his abundance of vitality, accumulated for years, and now brimming over: her tranquillity was disturbed by it. And he wearied her, too, perhaps, because she was always conscious of the menace of his love, beautiful and touching, but ever-present: so that she had always to be on her guard against it; it was more prudent to keep him at a distance. She did not admit it to herself, and thought she had no consideration for anything but Christophe's interests.

There was no lack of sound reasons at hand. In Italy just then it was difficult for a musician to live: the air was circumscribed. The musical life of the country was suppressed and deformed. The factory of the theater scattered its heavy ashes and its burning smoke upon the soil, whose flowers in old days had perfumed all Europe. If a man refused to enroll himself in the train of the brawlers, and could not, or would not, enter the factory, he was condemned to exile or a stifled existence. Genius was by no means dried up. But it was left to stagnate unprofitably and to go to ruin. Christophe had met more than one young musician in whom there lived again the soul of the melodious masters of the race and the instinct of beauty which filled the wise and simple art of the past. But who gave a thought to them? They could neither get their work played nor published. No interest was taken in the symphony. There were no ears for music except it were presented with a painted face! . . . So discouraged, they sang for themselves, and

soon sang no more. What was the good of it? Sleep . . . —Christophe would have asked nothing better than to help them. While they admitted that he could do so, their umbrageous pride would not consent to it. Whatever he did, he was a foreigner to them; and for Italians of long descent, in spite of the warm welcome they will give him, every foreigner is really a barbarian. They thought that the wretched condition of their art was a question to be threshed out among themselves, and while they extended all kind of friendly tributes to Christophe, they could not admit him as one of themselves.—What could he do? He could not compete with them and dispute with them their meager place in the sun, where they were by no means secure! . . .

Besides, genius cannot do without its food. The musician must have music—music to hear, music to make heard. A temporary withdrawal is valuable to the mind by forcing it to recuperate. But this can only be on condition that it will return. Solitude is noble, but fatal to an artist who has not the strength to break out of it. An artist must live the life of his own time, even if it be clamorous and impure: he must forever be giving and receiving, and giving, and giving, and again receiving.—Italy, at the time of Christophe's sojourn, was no longer the great market of the arts that once it was, and perhaps will be again. Nowadays the meeting-place of ideas, the exchange of the thought and spirit of the nations, are in the North. He who has the will to live must live in the North.

Left to himself, Christophe would have shuddered away from the rout. But Grazia felt his duty more clearly than he could see it. And she demanded more of him than of herself: no doubt because she valued him more highly, but also because it suited her. She delegated her energy upon him, and so maintained her tranquillity.—He had not the heart to be angry with her for it. Like Mary, hers was the better part. Each of us has his part to play in life. Christophe's was action. For her it was enough to be. He asked no more of her.

He asked nothing but to love her, if it were possible, a little less for himself, and a little more for her. For he did not altogether like her having so little egoism in her friendship as

to think only of the interests of her friend—who asked only to be allowed to give no thought to them.

He went away from her. And yet he did not leave her. As an old trouvère says: *"The lover does not leave his beloved but with the sanction of his soul."*

II

He was sick at heart as he reached Paris. It was the first time he had been there since the death of Olivier. He had wished never to see the city again. In the cab which took him from the station to his hotel he hardly dared look out of the window; for the first few days he stayed in his room and could not bring himself to go out. He was fearful of the memories lying in wait for him outside. But what exactly did he dread? Did he really know? Was it, as he tried to believe, the terror of seeing the dead spring to life again exactly as they had been? Or was it—the greater sorrow of being forced to know that they were dead? . . . Against this renewal of grief all the half-unconscious ruses of instinct had taken up arms. It was for this reason—(though perhaps he knew it not)—that he had chosen a hotel in a district far removed from that in which he had lived. And when for the first time he went out into the streets, having to conduct rehearsals at the concert-hall, when once more he came in contact with the life of Paris, he walked for a long time with his eyes closed, refusing to see what he did see, insisting on seeing only what he had seen in old days. He kept on saying to himself:

"I know that. I know that. . . ."

In art as in politics there was the same intolerant anarchy. The same Fair in the market-place. Only the actors had changed their parts. The revolutionaries of his day had become bourgeois, and the supermen had become men of fashion. The old independents were trying to stifle the new independents. The young men of twenty years ago were now more conservative than the old conservatives whom they had fought, and their

critics refused the newcomers the right to live. Apparently nothing was different.

But everything had changed. . . .

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"My dear, forgive me. It is good of you not to be angry with me for my silence. Your letter has helped me greatly. I have been through several weeks of terrible distress. I had nothing. I had lost you. Here I was feeling terribly the absence of those whom I have lost. All my old friends of whom I used to tell you have disappeared—Philomela—(you remember the singing voice that dear, sad night when, as I wandered through a gay crowd, I saw your eyes in a mirror gazing at me)—Philomela has realized her very reasonable dream: she inherited a little money, and has a farm in Normandy. M. Arnaud has retired and gone back to the provinces with his wife, to a little town near Angers. Of the famous men of my day many are dead or gone under; none are left save the same old puppets who twenty years ago were playing the juvenile lead in art and politics, and with the same false faces are still playing it. Outside these masks there are none whom I recognize. They seem to me to be grimacing over a grave. It is a terrible feeling.—More than this: during the first few days after my arrival I suffered physically from the ugliness of things, from the gray light of the North after your golden sun: the masses of dull houses, the vulgar lines of certain domes and monuments, which had never struck me before, hurt me cruelly. Nor was the moral atmosphere any more to my taste.

"And yet I have no complaint to make of the Parisians. They have given me a welcome altogether different from that which I received before. In my absence I seem to have become a kind of celebrity. I will say nothing of that, for I know what it is worth. I am touched by all the pleasant things which these people say and write of me, and am obliged to them. But what shall I say to you? I felt much nearer the people who attacked me in old days than I do to the people who laud me now. . . . It is my own fault, I know. Don't scold me.

I had a moment of uneasiness. It was to be expected. It is done now. I understand. Yes. You are right to have sent me back among men. I was in a fair way to be buried in my solitude. It is unhealthy to play at Zarathustra. The flood of life moves on, moves on away from us. There comes a time when one is as a desert. Many weary days in the burning sun are needed to dig a new channel in the sand, to dig down to the river.—It has been done. I am no longer dizzy. I am in the current again. I look and see.

"My dear, what a strange people are the French! Twenty years ago I thought they were finished. . . . They are just beginning again. My dear comrade, Jeannin, foretold it. But I thought he was deceiving himself. How could one believe it then! France was, like their Paris, full of broken houses, plaster, and holes. I said: 'They have destroyed everything. . . . What a race of rodents!'—a race of beavers. Just when you think them prostrate on their ruins, lo, they are using the ruins to lay the foundations of a new city. I can see it now in the scaffoldings which are springing up on all sides . . .

"Wenn ein Ding geschehen
*Selbst die Narren es verstehen, . . ."**

"In truth there is just the same French disorder. One needs to be used to it to see in the rout seething up from all directions, the bands of workmen, each going about his appointed task. There are also people who can do nothing without vilifying what their neighbors are doing. All this is calculated to upset the stoutest head. But when you have lived, as I have, nearly ten years with them, you cannot be deceived by their uproar. You see then that it is their way of spurring themselves on to work. They talk, but they work, and as each builder's yard sets about building a house, in the end you find that the city has been rebuilded. What is most remarkable is that, taken together, all these buildings are not discordant. They may maintain opposing theses, but all their minds are cast in the same mold. So that, beneath their anarchy, there are common instincts, a racial logic which takes the place of discipline, and this discipline is,

* "When a thing has happened, even the fools can see it."

when all is told, probably more solid than that of a Prussian regiment.

"Everywhere the same enthusiasm, the same constructive fever: in politics, where Socialists and Nationalists vie with one another in tightening up the wheels of slackened power; in art, which some wish to make into an old aristocratic mansion for the privileged few, and others a vast hall open to the people, a hall where the collective soul can sing; they are reconstructors of the past, or constructors of the future. But whatever they do, these ingenious creatures are forever building the same cells. They have the instincts of beavers or bees, and through the ages are forever doing the same things, returning to the same forms. The most revolutionary among them are perhaps those who most closely cling, though they may not know it, to the most ancient traditions. Among the syndicates and the most striking of the young writers I have found purely medieval souls.

"Now that I have grown used to their tumultuous ways, I can watch them working with pleasure. Let us be frank: I am too old a bear ever to feel at ease in any of their houses: I need the open air. But what good workers they are! That is their highest virtue. It laves the most mediocre and the most corrupt: and then, in their artists, what a sense of beauty! I remarked that much less in the old days. You taught me to see. My eyes were opened in the light of Rome. Your Renaissance men have helped me to understand these. A page of Debussy, a torso of Rodin, a phrase of Suarès, these are all in the direct line from your *cinquecestenti*.

"Not that there is not much that is distasteful to me here. I have found my old friends of the market-place, who used to drive me to fury. They have not changed. But, alas! I have changed. I cannot be severe. When I feel myself wanting to judge one of them harshly I say to myself: 'You have no right. You have done worse than these men, though you thought yourself so strong.' Also, I have learned that nothing exists in vain, and that even the vilest have their place in the scheme of the tragedy. The depraved dilettantists, the fœtid amoralists, have accomplished their termitic task; the tottering ruins must be brought down before they can be built up again. The Jews have been true to their sacred mission, which is, in the midst

of other races, to be a foreign race, the race which, from end to end of the world, is to link up the network of human unity. They break down the intellectual barriers between the nations, to give Divine Reason an open field. The worst agents of corruption, the ironic destroyers who ruin our old beliefs and kill our well-beloved dead, toil, unwittingly, in the holy work of new life. So the ferocious self-interest of the cosmopolitan bankers, whose labors are attended with such and so many disasters, build, whether they will or no, the future peace of the world, side by side with the revolutionaries who combat them, far more surely than the idiotic pacifists.

"You see, I am getting old. I have lost my bite. My teeth have lost their sharpness. When I go to the theater I am now only one of those simple spectators who apostrophize the actors and cry shame on the traitor.

"My tranquil Grace, I am only talking about myself: and yet I think only of you. If you knew how importunate is my ego! It is oppressive and absorbing. It is like a millstone that God has tied round my neck. How I should have loved to lay it at your feet! But what would you have done with it? It is a poor kind of present. . . . Your feet were made to tread the soft earth and the sand sinking beneath the tread. I see your feet carelessly passing over the lawns dappled with anemones. . . . (Have you been again to the Villa Doria?). . . . And you are tired! I see you now half-reclining in your favorite retreat, in your drawing-room, propped up on your elbow, holding a book which you do not read. You listen to me kindly, without paying much attention to what I say; for I am tiresome, and, for patience, you turn every now and then to your own thoughts; but you are courteous, and, taking care not to upset me, when a chance word brings you back from your distant journeying, your eyes, so absent before, quickly take on an expression of interest. And I am as far from what I am saying as you: I, too, hardly hear the sound of my words: and while I follow their reflection in your lovely face, in my heart I listen to other words which I do not speak to you. Those words, my tranquil Grace, unlike the others, you hear quite clearly, but you pretend not to hear them.

"Adieu. I think you will see me again in a little while.

I shall not languish here. What should I do now that my concerts are over?—I kiss your children on their little cheeks. They are yours and you. I must be content! . . .

"CHRISTOPHE."

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"Tranquil Grace" replied:

"MY DEAR,

"I received your letter in the little corner of the drawing-room that you remember so well, and I read it, as I am clever at reading, by letting your letter fall every now and then and resting. Don't laugh at me. I did that to make it last a long time. In that way we spent a whole afternoon together. The children asked me what it was I kept on reading. I told them it was a letter from you. Aurora looked at the paper pityingly and said: 'How tiresome it must be to write such a long letter!' I tried to make her understand that it was not an imposition I had set you, but a conversation we were having together. She listened without a word, then ran away with her brother to play in the next room, and a little later, when Lionello began to shout, I heard Aurora say: 'You mustn't make such a noise: mamma is talking to M. Christophe.'

"What you tell me about the French interests me, but it does not surprise me. You remember that I often used to reproach you with being unjust towards them. It is impossible to like them. But what an intelligent people they are! There are mediocre nations who are preserved by their goodness of heart or their physical vigor. The French are saved by their intelligence. It laves all their weaknesses, and regenerates them. When you think they are down, beaten, perverted, they find new youth in the ever-bubbling spring of their minds.

"But I must scold you. You ask my pardon for speaking only of yourself. You are an *ingannatore*. You tell me nothing about yourself. Nothing of what you have been doing. Nothing of what you have been seeing. My cousin Colette—(why did not you go and see her?)—had to send me press-cuttings about your concerts, or I should have known nothing of your success. You only mentioned it by the way. Are you so de-

tached from everything? . . . It is not true. Tell me that it pleased you. . . . It must please you, if only because it pleases me. I don't like you to have a disillusioned air. The tone of your letter is melancholic. That must not be. . . . It is good that you are more just to others. But that is no reason why you should abase yourself, as you do, by saying that you are worse than the worst of them. A good Christian would applaud you. I tell you it is a bad thing. I am not a good Christian. I am a good Italian, and I don't like you tormenting yourself with the past. The present is quite enough. I don't know exactly what it was that you did. You told me the story in a very few words, and I think I guessed the rest. It was not a nice story, but you are none the less dear to me for it. My poor, dear Christophe, a woman does not reach my age without knowing that an honest man is often very weak. If one did not know his weakness one would not love him so much. Don't think any more about what you have done. Think of what you are going to do. Repentance is quite useless. Repentance means going back. And in good as in evil, we must always go forward. *Sempre avanti, Savoia!* . . . So you think I am going to let you come back to Rome! You have nothing to do here. Stay in Paris, work, do: play your part in its artistic life. I will not have you throw it all up. I want you to make beautiful things, I want them to succeed, I want you to be strong and to help the new young Christophes who are setting out on the same struggles, and passing through the same trials. Look for them, help them, be kinder to your juniors than your seniors were to you.—In fine, I want you to be strong because I know that you are strong: you have no idea of the strength that gives me.

"Almost every day I go with the children to the Villa Borghese. Yesterday we drove to Ponte Molle, and walked round the tower of Monte Mario. You slander my powers of walking and my legs cry out against you: 'What did the fellow mean by saying at the Villa Doria that we get tired in ten paces? He knows nothing about it. If we are not prone to give ourselves trouble, it is because we are lazy, and not because we cannot. . . .' You forget, my dear, that I am a little peasant. . . .

"Go and see my cousin Colette. Are you still angry with her? She is a good creature at heart, and she swears by you! Apparently the Parisian women are crazy about your music. (Perhaps they were in the old days.) My Berne bear may, and he will, be the lion of Paris. Have you had letters? And declarations? You don't mention any woman. Can you be in love? Tell me. I am not jealous. Your friend,

"G."

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". . . So you think I am likely to be pleased with your last sentence! I would to God you were jealous! But don't look to me to make you so. I have no taste for these mad Parisiennes, as you call them. Mad? They would like to be so. But they are nothing like it. You need not hope that they will turn my head. There would be more chance of it perhaps if they were indifferent to my music. But it is only too true that they love it; and how am I to keep my illusions? When any one tells you that he understands you, you may be very sure that he will never do so. . . .

"Don't take my joking too seriously. The feeling I have for you does not make me unjust to other women. I have never had such true sympathy for them as I have now since I ceased to look at them with lover's eyes. The tremendous effort they have been making during the last thirty years to escape from the degrading and unwholesome semi-domesticity, to which our stupid male egoism condemned them, to their and our unhappiness, seems to me to be one of the most splendid facts of our time. In a town like this one learns to admire the new generation of young women, who, in spite of so many obstacles, with so much fresh ardor rush on to the conquest of knowledge and diplomas,—the knowledge, the diplomas which, they think, must liberate them, open to them the arcana of the unknown world and make them the equals of men. . . .

"No doubt their faith is illusory and rather ridiculous. But progress is never realized as we expect it to be: it is none the less realized because it takes entirely different paths from those we have marked out for it. This effort of the women will not

be wasted. It will make women completer and more human, as they were in the great ages. They will no longer be without interest in the living questions of the world, as most scandalously and monstrously they have been, for it is intolerable that a woman, though she be never so careful in her domestic duties, should think herself absolved from thinking of her civic duties in the modern city. Their great-great-grandmothers of the time of Joan of Arc and Catherine Sforza were not of this way of thinking. Woman has withered. We have refused her air and sun. She is taking them from us again by force. Ah! the brave little creatures! . . . Of course, many of those who are now struggling will die and many will be led astray. It is an age of crisis. The effort is too violent for those whose strength has too much gone to seed. When a plant has been for a long time without water, the first shower of rain is apt to scald it. But what would you? It is the price of progress. Those who come after will flourish through their sufferings. The poor little warlike virgins of our time, many of whom will never marry, will be more fruitful for posterity than the generations of matrons who gave birth before them; for, at the cost of their sacrifices, there will issue from them the women of a new classic age.

"I have not found these working bees in your cousin Colette's drawing-room. What whim was it made you send me to her? I had to obey you; but it is not well: you are abusing your power. I had refused three of her invitations, left two of her letters unanswered. She came and hunted me up at one of my rehearsals—(they were going through my sixth symphony). I saw her, during the interval, come in with her nose in the air, sniffing and crying: 'That smacks of love! Ah! How I love such music! . . .'

"She has changed, physically; only her cat-like eyes with their bulging pupils, and her fantastic nose, always wrinkling up and never still, are the same. But her face is wider, big-boned, highly colored, and coarsened. Sport has transformed her. She gives herself up to sport of all kinds. Her husband, as you know, is one of the swells at the Automobile Club and the Aero Club. There is not an aviation meeting, nor a race by air, land, or water, but the Stevens-Delestrades think them-

selves compelled to be present at it. They are always out on the highways and byways. Conversation is quite impossible; they talk of nothing but Racing, Rowing, Rugby, and the Derby. They belong to a new race of people. The days of *Pelléas* are forever gone for the women. Souls are no longer in fashion. All the girls hoist a red, swarthy complexion, tanned by driving in the open air and playing games in the sun: they look at you with eyes like men's eyes: they laugh and their laughter is a little coarse. In tone they have become more brutal, more crude. Every now and then your cousin will quite calmly say the most shocking things. She is a great eater, where she used to eat hardly anything. She still complains about her digestion, merely out of habit, but she never misses a mouthful for it. She reads nothing. No one reads among these people. Only music has found favor in their sight. Music has even profited by the neglect of literature. When these people are worn out, music is a Turkish bath to them, a warm vapor, massage, tobacco. They have no need to think. They pass from sport to love, and love also is a sport. But the most popular sport among their esthetic entertainments is dancing. Russian dancing, Greek dancing, Swiss dancing, American dancing, everything is set to a dance in Paris: Beethoven's symphonies, the tragedies of Æschylus, the *Clavecin bien Tempéré,* the antiques of the Vatican, *Orpheus,* Tristan, the Passion, and gymnastics. These people are suffering from vertigo.

"The queer thing is to see how your cousin reconciles everything, her estheticism, her sport, and her practical sense (for she has inherited from her mother her sense of business and her domestic despotism). All these things ought to make an incredible mixture, but she is quite at her ease with them all: her most foolish eccentricities leave her mind quite clear, just as she keeps her eyes and hands sure when she goes whirling along in her motor. She is a masterful woman: her husband, her guests, her servants, she leads them all, with drums beating and colors flying. She is also busy with politics: she is for 'Monseigneur'; not that I believe her to be a royalist, but it is another excuse for bestirring herself. And although she is incapable of reading more than ten pages of a book, she arranges the elections to the Academies.—She set about extending her

patronage to me. You may guess that that was not at all to my liking. What is most exasperating is that the fact of my having visited her in obedience to you has absolutely convinced her of her power over me. I take my revenge in thrusting home truths at her. She only laughs, and is never at a loss for a reply. 'She is a good creature at heart. . . .' Yes, provided she is occupied. She admits that herself: if the machine has nothing to grind she is capable of anything and everything to keep it going.—I have been to her house twice. I shall not go again. Twice is enough to prove my obedience to you. You don't want me to die? I leave her house broken, crushed, cramped. Last time I saw her I had a frightful nightmare after it: I dreamed I was her husband, all my life tied to that living whirlwind. . . . A foolish dream, and it need not trouble her real husband, for of all who go to the house he is the last to be seen with her, and when they are together they only talk of sport. They get on very well.

"How could these people make my music a success? I try not to understand. I suppose it shocked them in a new way. They liked it for brutalizing them. For the time being they like art with a body to it. But they have not the faintest conception of the soul in the body: they will pass from the infatuation of to-day to the indifference of to-morrow, from the indifference of to-morrow to the abuse of the day after, without ever having known it. That is the history of all artists. I am under no illusion as to my success, and have not been for a long time: and they will make me pay for it.—Meanwhile I see the most curious things going on. The most enthusiastic of my admirers is . . . (I give him you among a thousand) . . . our friend Lévy-Cœur. You remember the gentleman with whom I fought a ridiculous duel? Now he instructs those who used not to understand me. He does it very well too. He is the most intelligent of all the men talking about me. You may judge what the others are worth. There is nothing to be proud of, I assure you.

"I don't want to be proud of it. I am too humiliated when I hear the work for which I am belauded. I see myself in it, and what I see is not beautiful. What a merciless mirror is a piece of music to those who can see into it! Happily they are

blind and deaf. I have put so much of my troubles and weaknesses into my work that sometimes it seems to me wicked to let loose upon the world such hordes of demons. I am comforted when I see the tranquillity of the audience: they are trebly armored: nothing can reach them: were it not so, I should be damned. . . . You reproach me with being too hard on myself. You do not know me as I know myself. They see what we are: they do not see what we might have been, and we are honored for what is not so much the effect of our qualities as of the events that bear us along, and the forces which control us. Let me tell you a story. . . .

"The other evening I was in one of the cafés where they play fairly good music, though in a queer way: with five or six instruments, filled out with a piano, they play all the symphonies, the masses, the oratorios. It is just like the stonecutters in Rome, where they sell the Medici chapel as an ornament for the mantelpiece. Apparently this is useful to art, which, if it is to circulate among men, must be turned into base coin. For the rest there is no deception in these concerts. The programs are copious, the musicians conscientious. I found a violoncellist there and entered into conversation with him: his eyes reminded me strangely of my father's; he told me the story of his life. He was the grandson of a peasant, the son of a small official, a clerk in a *mairie* in a village in the North. They wanted to make him a gentleman, a lawyer, and he was sent to school in the neighboring town. He was a sturdy country boy, not at all fitted for being cooped up over the small work of a notary's office, and he could not stay caged in: he used to jump over the wall, and wander through the fields, and run after the girls, and spend his strength in brawling: the rest of the time he lounged and dreamed of things he would never do. Only one thing had any attraction for him: music. God knows why! There was not a single musician in his family, except a rather cracked great-uncle, one of those odd, provincial characters, whose often remarkable intelligence and gifts are spent, in their proud isolation, on whims, and cranks, and trivialities. This great-uncle had invented a new system of notation—(yet another!)—which was to revolutionize music; he even claimed to have found a system of stenography by which words, tune,

and accompaniment could be written simultaneously; but he never managed to transcribe it correctly himself. They just laughed at the old man in the family, but all the same, they were proud of him. They thought: 'He is an old madman. Who knows? Perhaps he is a genius.'—It was no doubt from him that the grandnephew had his mania for music. What music could he hear in the little town? . . . But bad music can inspire a love as pure as good music.

"The unhappy part of it was that there seemed no possibility of confessing to such a passion in such surroundings: and the boy had not his great-uncle's cracked brains. He hid away to read the old lunatic's lucubrations which formed the basis of his queer musical education. Vain and fearful of his father and of public opinion, he would say nothing of his ambitions until he had succeeded. He was crushed by his family, and did as so many French people of the middle-class have to do when, out of weakness or kindness, they dare not oppose the will of their relations: they submit to all appearance, and live their true life in perpetual secrecy. Instead of following his bent, he struggled on, against his inclination, in the work they had marked out for him. He was as incapable of succeeding in it as he was of coming to grief. Somehow or other he managed to pass the necessary examinations. The main advantage to him was that he escaped from the spying of his father and the neighbors. The law crushed him: he was determined not to spend his life in it. But while his father was alive he dared not declare his desire. Perhaps it was not altogether distasteful to him to have to wait a little before he took the decisive step. He was one of those men who all their lives long dazzle themselves with what they will do later on, with the things they could do. For the moment he did nothing. He lost his bearings, and, intoxicated by his new life in Paris, gave himself up with all his young peasant brutality to his two passions, woman and music; he was crazed with the concerts he went to, no less than with pleasure. He wasted years doing this without even turning to account the means at hand of completing his musical education. His umbrageous pride, his unfortunate independent and susceptible character kept him from taking any course of lessons or asking anybody's advice.

"When his father died he sent Themis and Justinian packing. He began to compose without having had the courage to acquire the necessary technique. His inveterate habit of idle lounging and his taste for pleasure had made him incapable of any serious effort. He felt keenly: but his idea, and its form, would at once slip away: when all was told he expressed nothing but the commonplace. The worst of all was that there was really something great in this mediocrity. I read two of his old compositions. Here and there were striking ideas, left in the rough and then deformed. They were like fireflies over a bog. . . . And what a strange mind he had! He tried to explain Beethoven's sonatas to me. He saw them as absurd, childish stories. But such passion as there was in him, such profound seriousness! Tears would come to his eyes as he talked. He would die for the thing he loves. He is touching and grotesque. Just as I was on the point of laughing in his face, I wanted to take him to my arms. . . . He is fundamentally honest, and has a healthy contempt for the charlatanry of the Parisian groups and their sham reputations,—(though at the same time he cannot help having the bourgeois admiration for successful men). . . .

"He had a small legacy. In a few months it was all gone, and, finding himself without resources, he had, like so many others of his kind, the criminal honesty to marry a girl, also without resources, whom he had seduced; she had a fine voice, and played music without any love for it. He had to live on her voice and her mediocre talent until he had learned how to play the 'cello. Naturally it was not long before they saw their mediocrity, and could not bear each other. They had a little girl. The father transferred his power of illusion to the child, and thought that she would be what he had failed to be. The little girl took after her mother: she was made to play the piano, though she had not a shadow of talent; she adored her father, and applied herself to her work to please him. For several years they plied the hotels in the watering-places, picking up more insults than money. The child was ailing and overworked, and died. The wife grew desperate, and became more shrewish every day. So his life became one of endless misery,

with no hope of escape, brightened only by an ideal which he knew himself to be incapable of attaining. . . .

"And, my dear, when I saw that poor broken devil, whose life has been nothing but a series of disappointments, I thought: 'That is what I might have been.' There was much in common in our boyhood, and certain adventures in our two lives are the same; I have even found a certain kinship in some of our musical ideas: but his have stopped short. What is it that has kept me from foundering as he has done? My will, no doubt. But also the chances of life. And even taking my will, is that due only to my merits? Is it not rather due to my descent, my friends, and God who has aided me? . . . Such thoughts make a man humble. With such thoughts he feels brotherly to all who love his art, and suffer for it.

"From lowest to highest the distance is not so great. . . .

"On that I thought of what you said in your letter. You are right: an artist has no right to hold aloof, so long as he can help others. So I shall stay: I shall force myself to spend a few months in every year here, or in Vienna, or Berlin, although it is hard for me to grow accustomed to these cities again. But I must not abdicate. If I do not succeed in being of any great service, as I have good reason to think I shall not, perhaps my sojourn in these cities will be useful to me, myself. And I shall console myself with the thought that it was your wish. Besides . . . (I will not lie) . . . I am beginning to find it pleasant. Adieu, tyrant. You have triumphed. I am beginning not only to do what you want me to do, but to love doing it.

"CHRISTOPHE."

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So he stayed, partly to please her, but also because his artistic curiosity was reawakened, and was drawn on to contemplation of the renewal of art. Everything that he saw and did he presented for Grazia's scrutiny in his letters. He knew that he was deceiving himself as to the interest she would take in it all; he suspected her of a certain indifference. But he was grateful to her for not letting him see it too clearly.

She answered him regularly once a fortnight. Affectionate, composed letters, like her gestures. When she told him of her life she never discarded her tender, proud reserve. She knew the violence with which her words went resounding through Christophe's heart. She preferred that he should think her cold, rather than to send him flying to heights whither she did not wish to follow him. But she was too womanly not to know the secret of not discouraging her friend's love, and of, at once, by gentle words, soothing the dismay and disappointment caused by her indifferent words. Christophe soon divined her tactics, and by a counter-trick tried in his turn to control his warmth and to write more composedly, so that Grazia's replies should not be so studiously restrained.

The longer he stayed in Paris the greater grew his interest in the new activity stirring in that gigantic ant-heap. He was the more interested in it all as in the young ants he found less sympathy with himself. He was not deceived: his success was a Pyrrhic victory. After an absence of ten years his return had created a sensation in Parisian society. But by an ironic turn of events, such as is by no means rare, he found himself patronized by his old enemies the snobs, and people of fashion: the artists were either mutely hostile or distrustful of him. He won his way by his name, which already belonged to the past, by his considerable accomplishment, by his tone of passionate conviction, and the violence of his sincerity. But if people were forced to reckon with him, to admire or respect him, they did not understand or love him. He was outside the art of the time. A monster, a living anachronism. He had always been that. His ten years of solitude had accentuated the contrast. During his absence in Europe, and especially in Paris, a great work of reconstruction had been carried through. A new order was springing to life. A generation was arising, desirous rather of action than of understanding, hungry rather for happiness than for truth. It wished to live, to grasp life, even at the cost of a lie. Lies of pride—all manner of pride: pride of race, pride of caste, pride of religion, pride of culture and art—all were food to this generation, provided that they were armor of steel, provided that they could be turned to sword and buckler, and that, sheltered by them, they could march on to victory.

So to this generation it was distasteful to hear the great voice of torment reminding it of the existence of sorrow and doubt, those whirlwinds that had troubled the night that was hardly gone, and, in spite of its denials, went on menacing the universe, the whirlwinds that it wished to forget. These young people turned away in despite, and they shouted at the top of their voices to deafen themselves. But the voice was heard above them all. And they were angry.

Christophe, on the other hand, regarded them with a friendly eye. He hailed the upward movement of the world towards happiness. The deliberate narrowness of its impulse affected him not at all. When a man wishes to go straight to his goal, he must look straight in front of him. For his part, sitting at the turning of the world, he was rejoiced to see behind him the tragic splendor of the night, and, in front of him, the smile of young hope, the uncertain beauty of the fresh, fevered dawn. And he was at the stationary point of the axis of the pendulum while the clock was beginning to go again. Without following its onward march, he listened joyfully to the beating of the rhythm of life. He joined in the hope of those who denied his past agonies. What would be, would be, as he had dreamed. Ten years before, in night and suffering, Olivier—the little Gallic cock—had with his frail song announced the distant day. The singer was no more; but his song was coming to pass. In the garden of France the birds were singing. And, above all the singing, clearer, louder, happier, Christophe suddenly heard the voice of Olivier come to life again.

He was absently reading a book of poems at a bookstall. The name of the author was unknown to him. Certain words struck him and he went on reading. As he read on between the uncut pages he seemed to recognize a friendly voice, the features of a friend. . . . He could not define his feeling, nor could he bring himself to put the book down, and so he bought it. When he reached his room he resumed his reading. At once the old obsession descended on him. The impetuous rhythm of the poem evoked, with a visionary precision, the universe and age-old souls—the gigantic trees of which we are all the leaves and the fruit—the nations. From the pages there arose the superhuman

figure of the Mother—she who was before us, she who will be after us. She who reigns, like the Byzantine Madonnas, lofty as the mountains, at whose feet kneel and pray ant-like human beings. The poet was hymning the homeric struggle of the great goddesses, whose lances had clashed together since the beginning of the ages: the eternal Iliad which is to that of Troy what the Alps are to the little hills of Greece.

Such an epic of warlike pride and action was far removed from the ideas of a European soul like Christophe's. And yet, in gleams, in the vision of the French soul—the graceful virgin, who bears the Ægis, Athena, with blue eyes shining through the darkness, the goddess of work, the incomparable artist, sovereign reason, whose glittering lance hurls down the tumultuously shouting barbarians—Christophe perceived an expression, a smile that he knew and had loved. But just as he was on the point of fixing it the vision died away. And while he was exasperated by this vain pursuit, lo! as he turned a page, he came on a story which Olivier had told him a few days before his death. . . .

He was struck dumb. He ran to the publishers, and asked for the poet's address. It was refused, as is the custom. He lost his temper. In vain. Finally he remembered that he could find what he wanted in a year-book. He did find it, and went at once to the author's house. When he wanted anything he found it impossible to wait.

It was in the Batignolles district on the top floor. There were several doors opening on to a common landing. Christophe knocked at the door which had been pointed out to him. The next door opened. A young woman, not at all pretty, very dark, with low-growing hair and a sallow complexion—a shriveled face with very sharp eyes—asked what he wanted. She looked suspicious. Christophe told her why he had come, and, in answer to her next question, gave his name. She came out of her room and opened the other door with a key which she had in her pocket. But she did not let Christophe enter immediately. She told him to wait in the corridor, and went in alone, shutting the door in his face. At last Christophe reached the well-guarded sanctum. He crossed a half-empty room which served as a dining-room and contained only a few shabby pieces

of furniture, while near the curtainless window several birds were twittering in an aviary. In the next room, on a threadbare divan, lay a man. He sat up to welcome Christophe. At once Christophe recognized the emaciated face, lit up by the soul, the lovely velvety black eyes burning with a feverish flame, the long, intelligent hands, the misshapen body, the shrill, husky voice. . . . Emmanuel! The little cripple boy who had been the innocent cause. . . . And Emmanuel, suddenly rising to his feet, had also recognized Christophe.

They stood for a moment without speaking. Both of them saw Olivier. . . . They could not bring themselves to shake hands. Emmanuel had stepped backward. After ten long years, an unconfessed rancor, the old jealousy that he had had of Christophe, leaped forth from the obscure depths of instinct. He stood still, defiant and hostile.—But when he saw Christophe's emotion, when on his lips he read the name that was in their thoughts: "Olivier"—it was stronger than he: he flung himself into the arms held out towards him.

Emmanuel asked:

"I knew you were in Paris. But how did you find me?"

Christophe said:

"I read your last book: through it I heard *his* voice."

"Yes," said Emmanuel. "You recognized it? I owe everything that I am now to him."

(He avoided pronouncing the name.)

After a moment he went on gloomily:

"He loved you more than me."

Christophe smiled:

"If a man loves truly there is neither more nor less: he gives himself to all those whom he loves."

Emmanuel looked at Christophe: the tragic seriousness of his stubborn eyes was suddenly lit up with a profound sweetness. He took Christophe's hand and made him sit on the divan by his side.

Each told the story of his life. From fourteen to twenty-five Emmanuel had practised many trades: printer, upholsterer, pedlar, bookseller's assistant, lawyer's clerk, secretary to a politician, journalist. . . . In all of them he had found the means of learning feverishly, here and there finding the support

of good people who were struck by the little man's energy, more often falling into the hands of people who exploited his poverty and his gifts, turning his worst experiences to profit, and succeeding in fighting his way through without too much bitterness, leaving behind him only the remains of his feeble health. His singular aptitude for the dead languages (not so rare as one is inclined to believe in a race imbued with humanistic traditions) gained him the interest and support of an old Hellenizing priest. These studies, which he had no time to push very far, served him as mental discipline and a school of style. This man, who had risen from the dregs of the people, whose whole education had been won by his own efforts, haphazard, so that there were great gaps in it, had acquired a gift of verbal expression, a mastery of thought over form, such as ten years of a university education cannot give to the young bourgeois. He attributed it all to Olivier. And yet others had helped him more effectively. But from Olivier came the spark which in the night of this man's soul had lighted the eternal flame. The rest had but poured oil into the lamp.

He said:

"I only began to understand him from the moment when he passed away. But everything he ever said had become a part of me. His light never left me."

He spoke of his work and the task which he declared had been left to him by Olivier; the awakening of the French, the kindling of that torch of heroic idealism of which Olivier had been the herald: he wished to make himself the resounding voice which should hover above the battlefield and declare the approaching victory: he sang the epic of the new-birth of his race.

His poems were the product of that strange race that, through the ages, has so strongly preserved its old Celtic aroma, while it has ever taken a bizarre pride in clothing its ideas with the cast-off clothes and laws of the Roman conqueror. There were to be found in it absolutely pure the Gallic audacity, the spirit of heroic reason, of irony, the mixture of braggadocio and crazy bravura, which set out to pluck the beards of the Roman senators, and pillaged the temple of Delphi, and laughingly hurled its javelins at the sky. But this little Parisian dwarf had had to shape his passions, as his periwigged grandfathers had done,

and as no doubt his great-grandnephews would do, in the bodies of the heroes and gods of Greece, two thousand years dead. It is a curious instinct in these people which accords well with their need of the absolute: as they impose their ideas on the remains of the ages, they seem to themselves to be imposing them on the ages. The constraint of his classic form only gave Emmanuel's passions a more violent impulse. Olivier's calm confidence in the destinies of France had been transformed in his little protégé into a burning faith, hungering for action and sure of triumph. He willed it, he said it, he clamored for it. It was by his exalted faith and his optimism that he had uplifted the souls of the French public. His book had been as effective as a battle. He had made a breach in the ranks of skepticism and fear. The whole younger generation had thronged to follow him towards the new destiny. . . .

He grew excited as he talked: his eyes burned, his pale face glowed pink in patches, and his voice rose to a scream. Christophe could not help noticing the contrast between the devouring fire and the wretched body that was its pyre. He was only half-conscious of the irony of this stroke of fate. The singer of energy, the poet who hymned the generation of intrepid sport, of action, war, could hardly walk without losing his breath, was extremely temperate, lived on a strict diet, drank water, could not smoke, lived without women, bore every passion in his body, and was reduced by his health to asceticism.

Christophe watched Emmanuel, and he felt a mixture of admiration and brotherly pity. He tried not to show it: but no doubt his eyes betrayed his feeling. Emmanuel's pride, which ever kept an open wound in his side, made him think he read commiseration in Christophe's eyes, and that was more odious to him than hatred. The fire in him suddenly died down. He stopped talking. Christophe tried in vain to win back his confidence. His soul had closed up. Christophe saw that he was wounded.

The hostile silence dragged on. Christophe got up. Emmanuel took him to the door without a word. His step declared his infirmity: he knew it: it was a point of pride with him to appear indifferent: but he thought Christophe was watching him, and his rancor grew.

Just as he was coldly shaking hands with his guest, and saying good-by, an elegant young lady rang at the door. She was escorted by a pretentious nincompoop whom Christophe recognized as a man he had seen at theatrical first-nights, smiling, chattering, waving his hand, kissing the hands of the ladies, and from his stall shedding smiles all over the theater: not knowing his name, he had called him "the buck."—The buck and his companion, on seeing Emmanuel, flung themselves on the *"cher maître"* with obsequious and familiar effusiveness. As Christophe walked away he heard Emmanuel in his dry voice saying that he was too busy to see any one. He admired the man's gift of being disagreeable. He did not know Emmanuel's reasons for scowling at the rich snobs who came to gratify him with their indiscreet visits; they were prodigal of fine phrases and eulogy; but they no more thought of helping him in his poverty than the famous friends of César Franck ever dreamed of releasing him from the piano-lessons which he had to give up to the last to make a living.

Christophe went several times again to see Emmanuel. He never succeeded in restoring the intimacy of his first visit. Emmanuel showed no pleasure in seeing him, and maintained a suspicious reserve. Every now and then he would be carried away by the generous need of expansion of his genius: a remark of Christophe's would shake him to the very roots of his being: then he would abandon himself to a fit of enthusiastic confidence: and over his secret soul his idealism would cast the glowing light of a flashing poetry. Then, suddenly, he would fall back: he would shrivel up into sulky silence: and Christophe would find him hostile once more.

They were divided by too many things. Not the least was the difference in their ages. Christophe was on the way to full consciousness and mastery of himself. Emmanuel was still in process of formation and more chaotic than Christophe had ever been. The originality of his face came from the contradictory elements that were at grips in him; a mighty stoicism, struggling to tame a nature consumed by atavistic desires,—(he was the son of a drunkard and a prostitute);—a frantic imagination which tugged against the bit of a will of steel; an immense egoism, and an immense love for others, and of the

two it were impossible to tell which would be the conqueror; an heroic idealism and a morbid thirst for glory which made him impatient of other superiorities. If Olivier's ideas, and his independence, and his disinterestedness were in him, if Emmanuel was superior to his master by his plebeian vitality which knew not disgust in the face of action, by his poetic genius and his thicker skin, which protected him from disgust of all kinds, yet he was very far from reaching the serenity of Antoinette's brother: his character was vain and uneasy: and the restlessness of other people only augmented his own.

He lived in a stormy alliance with a young woman who was his neighbor, the woman who had received Christophe on his first visit. She loved Emmanuel, and was jealously busy over him, looked after his house, copied out his work, and wrote to his dictation. She was not beautiful, and she bore the burden of a passionate soul. She came of the people, and for a long time worked in a bookbinding workshop, then in the post-office. Her childhood had been spent in the stifling atmosphere common to all the poor workpeople of Paris: souls and bodies all huddled together, harassing work, perpetual promiscuity, no air, no silence, never any solitude, no opportunity for recuperation or of defending the inner sanctuary of the heart. She was proud in spirit, with her mind ever seething with a religious fervor for a confused ideal of truth. Her eyes were worn out with copying out at night, sometimes without a lamp, by moonlight, *Les Misérables* of Hugo. She had met Emmanuel at a time when he was more unhappy than she, ill and without resources; and she had devoted herself to him. This passion was the first, the only living love of her life. So she attached herself to him with a hungry tenacity. Her affection was a terrible trial to Emmanuel, who rather submitted to than shared it. He was touched by her devotion: he knew that she was his best friend, the only creature to whom he was everything, who could not do without him. But this very feeling overwhelmed him. He needed liberty and isolation; her eyes always greedily beseeching a look obsessed him: he used to speak harshly to her, and longed to say: "Go!" He was irritated by her ugliness and her clumsy manners. Though he had seen but little of fashionable society, and though he heartily despised it,—(for he

suffered at appearing even uglier and more ridiculous there),—he was sensitive to elegance, and alive to the attraction of women who felt towards him (he had no doubt of it) exactly as he felt towards his friend. He tried to show her an affection which he did not possess or, at least, which was continually obscured by gusts of involuntary hatred. He could not do it: he had a great generous heart in his bosom, hungering to do good, and also a demon of violence, capable of much evil. This inward struggle and his consciousness of his inability to end it to his advantage plunged him into a state of acute irritation, which he vented on Christophe.

Emmanuel could not help feeling a double antipathy towards Christophe; firstly because of his old jealousy (one of those childish passions which still subsist, though we may forget the cause of them): secondly, because of his fierce nationalism. In France he had embodied all the dreams of justice, pity, and human brotherhood conceived by the best men of the preceding age. He did not set France against the rest of Europe as an enemy whose fortune is swelled by the ruin of the other nations, but placed her at their head, as the legitimate sovereign who reigns for the good of all—the sword of the ideal, the guide of the human race. Rather than see her commit an injustice he would have preferred to see her dead. But he had no doubt of her. He was exclusively French in culture and in heart, nourished wholly by the French tradition, the profound reasons of which he found in his own instinct. Quite sincerely he ignored foreign thought, for which he had a sort of disdainful condescension,—and was exasperated if a foreigner did not accept his lowly position.

Christophe saw all that, but, being older and better versed in life, he did not worry about it. If such pride of race could not but be injurious, Christophe was not touched by it: he could appreciate the illusions of filial love, and never dreamed of criticising the exaggerations of a sacred feeling. Besides, humanity is profited by the vain belief of the nations in their mission. Of all the reasons at hand for feeling himself estranged from Emmanuel only one hurt him: Emmanuel's voice, which at times rose to a shrill, piercing scream. Christophe's ears suffered cruelly. He could not help making a face when it

happened. He tried to prevent Emmanuel's seeing it. He endeavored to hear the music and not the instrument. There was such a beauty of heroism shining forth from the crippled poet when he evoked the victories of the mind, the forerunners of other victories, the conquest of the air, the "flying God" who should upraise the peoples, and, like the star of Bethlehem, lead them in his train, in ecstasies, towards far distant spaces or near revenge. The splendor of these visions of energy did not prevent Christophe's seeing their danger, and foreknowing whither this change and the growing clamor of the new Marseillaise would lead. He thought, with a little irony, (with no regret for past or fear of the future), that the song would find an echo that the singer could not foresee, and that a day would come when men would sigh for the vanished days of the Market-Place.—How free they were then! The golden age of liberty! Never would its like be known again. The world was moving on to the age of strength, of health, of virile action, and perhaps of glory, but also of harsh authority and narrow order. We shall have called it enough with our prayers, the age of iron, the classic age! The great classic ages—Louis XIV. or Napoleon—seem now at a distance the peaks of humanity. And perhaps the nation therein most victoriously realized its ideal State. But go and ask the heroes of those times what they thought of them! Your Nicolas Poussin went to live and die in Rome; he was stifled in your midst. Your Pascal, your Racine, said farewell to the world. And among the greatest, how many others lived apart in disgrace, and oppressed! Even the soul of a man like Molière hid much bitterness.—For your Napoleon, whom you so greatly regret, your fathers do not seem to have had any doubt as to their happiness, and the master himself was under no illusion; he knew that when he disappeared the world would say: "Ouf!" . . . What a wilderness of thought surrounds the *Imperator!* Over the immensity of the sands, the African sun. . . .

Christophe did not say all that was in his mind. A few hints were enough to set Emmanuel in a fury, and he did not try the experiment again. But it was in vain that he kept his thoughts to himself: Emmanuel knew what he was thinking. More than that, he was obscurely conscious that Christophe saw

farther than he. And he was only irritated by it. Young people never forgive their elders for forcing them to see what they will see in twenty years' time.

Christophe read his heart, and said to himself:

"He is right. Every man his own faith. A man must believe what he believes. God keep me from disturbing his confidence in the future!"

But his mere presence upset Emmanuel. When two personalities are together, however hard they try to efface themselves, one always crushes the other, and the other always feels rancor and humiliation. Emmanuel's pride was hurt by Christophe's superiority in experience and character. And perhaps also he was keeping back the love which he felt growing in himself for him.

He became more and more shy. He locked his door, and did not answer letters.—Christophe had to give up seeing him.

During the first days of July Christophe reckoned up what he had gained by his few months' stay in Paris: many new ideas, but few friends. Brilliant and derisory successes, in which he saw his own image and the image of his work weakened or caricatured in mediocre minds; and there is but scant pleasure in that. And he failed to win the sympathy of those by whom he would have loved to be understood; they had not welcomed his advances; he could not throw in his lot with them, however much he desired to share their hopes and to be their ally; it was as though their uneasy vanity shunned his friendship and found more satisfaction in having him for an enemy. In short, he had let the tide of his own generation pass without passing with it, and the tide of the next generation would have nothing to do with him. He was isolated, and was not surprised, for all his life he had been accustomed to it. But now he thought he had won the right, after this fresh attempt, to return to his Swiss hermitage, until he had realized a project which for some time past had been taking shape. As he grew older he was tormented with the desire to return and settle down in his own country. He knew nobody there, and would find even less intellectual kinship than in this foreign city: but none the less it was his country: you

do not ask those of your blood to think your thoughts: between them and you there are a thousand secret ties; the senses learned to read in the same book of sky and earth, and the heart speaks the same language.

He gaily narrated his disappointments to Grazia, and told her of his intention of returning to Switzerland: jokingly he asked her permission to leave Paris, and assured her that he was going during the following week. But at the end of the letter there was a postscript saying:

"I have changed my mind. My departure is postponed."

Christophe had entire confidence in Grazia: he gave into her hands the secret of his inmost thoughts. And yet there was a room in his heart of which he kept the key: it contained the memories which did not belong only to himself, but to those whom he had loved. He kept back everything concerning Olivier. His reserve was not deliberate. The words would not come from his lips whenever he tried to talk to Grazia about Olivier. She had never known him. . . .

Now, on the morning when he was writing to his friend, there came a knock on the door. He went to open it, cursing at being interrupted. A boy of fourteen or fifteen asked for M. Krafft. Christophe gruffly bade him come in. He was fair, with blue eyes, fine features, not very tall, with a slender, erect figure. He stood in front of Christophe, rather shyly, and said not a word. Quickly he pulled himself together, and raised his limpid eyes, and looked at him with keen interest. Christophe smiled as he scanned the boy's charming face, and the boy smiled too.

"Well?" said Christophe. "What do you want?"

"I came," said the boy. . . .

(And once more he became confused, blushed, and was silent.)

"I can see that you have come," said Christophe, laughing. "But why have you come? Look at me. Are you afraid of me?"

The boy smiled once more, shook his head, and said:

"No."

"Bravo! Then tell me who you are."

"I am . . ." said the boy.

He stopped once more. His eyes wandered curiously round

the room, and lighted on a photograph of Olivier on the mantelpiece.

"Come!" said Christophe. "Courage!"

The boy said:

"I am his son."

Christophe started: he got up from his chair, took hold of the boy's arm, and drew him to him; he sank back into his chair and held him in a close embrace: their faces almost touched; and he gazed and gazed at him, saying:

"My boy. . . . My poor boy. . . ."

Suddenly he took his face in his hands and kissed his brow, eyes, cheeks, nose, hair. The boy was frightened and shocked by such a violent demonstration, and broke away from him. Christophe let him go. He hid his face in his hand, and leaned his brow against the wall, and sat so for the space of a few moments. The boy had withdrawn to the other end of the room. Christophe raised his head. His face was at rest: he looked at the boy with an affectionate smile.

"I frightened you," he said. "Forgive me. . . . You see, I loved him."

The boy was still frightened, and said nothing.

"How like you are to him!" said Christophe. . . . "And yet I should not have recognized you. What is it that has changed? . . ."

He asked:

"What is your name?"

"Georges."

"Oh! yes. I remember. Christophe Olivier Georges. . . . How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen! Is it so long ago? . . . It is as though it were yesterday—or far back in the darkness of time. . . . How like you are to him! The same features. It is the same, and yet another. The same colored eyes, but not the same eyes. The same smile, the same lips, but not the same voice. You are stronger. You hold yourself more erect: your face is fuller, but you blush just as he used to do. Come, sit down, let us talk. Who sent you to me?"

"No one."

"You came of your own accord? How do you know about me?"

"People have talked to me about you."

"Who?"

"My mother."

"Ah!" said Christophe. "Does she know that you came to see me?"

"No."

Christophe said nothing for a moment; then he asked:

"Where do you live?"

"Near the Parc Monçeau."

"You walked here? Yes? It is a long way. You must be tired."

"I am never tired."

"Good! Show me your arms."

(He felt them.)

"You are a strong boy. . . . What put it into your head to come and see me?"

"My father loved you more than any one."

"Did she tell you so?"

(He corrected himself.)

"Did your mother tell you so?"

"Yes."

Christophe smiled pensively. He thought: "She too! . . . How they all loved him! Why did they not let him see it? . . ."

He went on:

"Why did you wait so long before you came?"

"I wanted to come sooner. But I thought you would not want to see me."

"I!"

"I saw you several weeks ago at the Chevillard concerts: I was with my mother, sitting a little away from you: I bowed to you: you looked through me, and frowned, and took no notice."

"I looked at you? . . . My poor boy, how could you think that? . . . I did not see you. My eyes are tired. That is why I frown. . . . You don't think me so cruel as that?"

"I think you could be cruel too, if you wanted to be."

"Really?" said Christophe. "In that case, if you thought I did not want to see you, how did you dare to come?"

"Because I wanted to see you."

"And if I had refused to see you?"

"I shouldn't have let you do that."

He said this with a little decided air, at once shy and provoking.

Christophe burst out laughing, and Georges laughed too.

"You would have sent me packing! Think of that! You rogue! . . . No, decidedly, you are not like your father."

A shadow passed over the boy's mobile face.

"You think I am not like him? But you said, just now . . .? You don't think he would have loved me? You don't love me?"

"What difference does it make to you whether I love you or not?"

"A great deal of difference."

"Because . . .?"

"Because I love you."

In a moment his eyes, his lips, all his features, took on a dozen different expressions, like the shadows of the clouds on an April day chasing over the fields before the spring winds. Christophe had the most lovely joy in gazing at him and listening to him; it seemed to him that all the cares of the past were washed away; his sorrowful experiences, his trials, his sufferings and Olivier's sufferings, all were wiped out: he was born again in this young shoot of Olivier's life.

They talked on. Georges knew nothing of Christophe's music until the last few months, but since Christophe had been in Paris, he had never missed a concert at which his work was played. He spoke of it with an eager expression, his eyes shining and laughing, with the tears not far behind: he was like a lover. He told Christophe that he adored music, and that he wanted to be a composer. But after a question or two, Christophe saw that the boy knew not even the elements of music. He asked about his work. Young Jeannin was at the lycée; he said cheerfully that he was not a good scholar.

"What are you best at? Literature or science?"

"Very much the same."

"What? What? Are you a dunce?"

The boy laughed frankly and said:

"I think so."

Then he added confidentially:

"But I know that I am not, all the same."

Christophe could not help laughing.

"Then why don't you work? Aren't you interested in anything?"

"No. I'm interested in everything."

"Well, then, why?"

"Everything is so interesting that there is no time. . . ."

"No time? What the devil do you do?"

He made a vague gesture:

"Many things. I play music, and games, and I go to exhibitions. I read. . . ."

"You would do better to read your school-books."

"We never read anything interesting in school. . . . Besides, we travel. Last month I went to England to see the Oxford and Cambridge match."

"That must help your work a great deal!"

"Bah! You learn much more that way than by staying at the lycée."

"And what does your mother say to that?"

"Mother is very reasonable. She does whatever I want."

"You bad boy! . . . You can thank your stars I am not your father. . . ."

"You wouldn't have had a chance. . . ."

It was impossible to resist his banter.

"Tell me, you traveler," said Christophe. "Do you know my country?"

"Yes."

"I bet you don't know a word of German."

"Yes, I do. I know it quite well."

"Let us see."

They began to talk German. The boy jabbered on quite ungrammatically with the most droll coolness; he was very intelligent and wide awake, and guessed more than he understood: often he guessed wrong; but he was the first to laugh at his mistakes. He talked eagerly about his travels and his

reading. He had read a great deal, hastily, superficially, skipping half the pages, and inventing what he had left unread, but he was always urged on by a keen curiosity, forever seeking reasons for enthusiasm. He jumped from one subject to another, and his face grew animated as he talked of plays or books that had moved him. There was no sort of order in his knowledge. It was impossible to tell how he could read right through a tenth-rate book, and yet know nothing of the greatest masterpieces.

"That is all very well," said Christophe. "But you will never do anything if you do not work."

"Oh! I don't need to. We are rich."

"The devil! Then it is a very serious state of things. Do you want to be a man who does nothing and is good for nothing?"

"No. I should like to do everything. It is stupid to shut yourself up all your life in a profession."

"But it is the only means yet discovered of doing any good."

"So they say!"

"What do you mean? 'So they say!' . . . I say so. I've been working at my profession for forty years, and I am just beginning to get a glimmer of it."

"Forty years, to learn a profession! When can you begin to practise it?"

Christophe began to laugh.

"You little disputatious Frenchman!"

"I want to be a musician," said Georges.

"Well, it is not too early for you to begin. Shall I teach you?"

"Oh! I should be so glad!"

"Come to-morrow. I'll see what you are worth. If you are worth nothing, I shall forbid you ever to lay hands on a piano. If you have a real inclination for it, we'll try and make something of you. . . . But, I warn you, I shall make you work."

"I will work," said Georges delightedly.

They said good-by until the morrow. As he was going, Georges remembered that he had other engagements on the

morrow, and also for the day after. Yes, he was not free until the end of the week. They arranged day and hour.

But when the day and hour came, Christophe waited in vain. He was disappointed. He had been looking forward with child-like glee to seeing Georges again. His unexpected visit had brightened his life. It had made him so happy, and moved him so much that he had not slept the night after it. With tender gratitude he thought of the young friend who had sought him out for his friend's sake. His natural grace, his malicious and ingenuous frankness had delighted him: he sank back into the mute intoxication, the buzzing of happiness, which had filled his ears and his heart during the first days of his friendship with Olivier. It was allied now with a graver and almost religious feeling which, through the living, saw the smile of the past.—He waited all the next day and the day after. Nobody came. Not even a letter of excuse. Christophe was very mournful, and cast about for excuses for the boy. He did not know where to write to him, and he did not know his address. Had he had it he would not have dared to write. When the heart of an older man is filled with love for a young creature, he feels a certain modesty about letting him see the need he has of him: he knows that the young man has not the same need: they are not evenly matched: and nothing is so much dreaded as to seem to be imposing oneself on a person who cares not a jot.

The silence dragged on. Although Christophe suffered under it, he forced himself to take no step to hunt up the Jeannins. But every day he expected the boy, who never came. He did not go to Switzerland, but stayed through the summer in Paris. He thought himself absurd, but he had no taste for traveling. Only when September came did he decide to spend a few days at Fontainebleau.

About the end of October Georges Jeannin came and knocked at his door. He excused himself calmly, without being in the least put out by his long silence.

"I could not come," he said. "And then we went away to stay in Brittany."

"You might have written to me," said Christophe.

"Yes. I did try. But I never had the time. . . . Besides," he said, laughing, "I forgot all about it."

"When did you come back?"

"At the beginning of October."

"And it has taken you three weeks to come? . . . Listen. Tell me frankly: Did your mother prevent you? . . . Does she dislike your seeing me?"

"No. Not at all. She told me to come to-day."

"What?"

"The last time I saw you before the holidays I told her everything when I got home. She told me I had done right, and she asked about you, and pestered me with a great many questions. When we came home from Brittany, three weeks ago, she made me promise to go and see you again. A week ago she reminded me again. This morning, when she found that I had not been, she was angry with me, and wanted me to go directly after breakfast, without more ado."

"And aren't you ashamed to tell me that? Must you be forced to come and see me?"

"No. You mustn't think that. . . . Oh! I have annoyed you. Forgive me. . . . I am a muddle-headed idiot. . . . Scold me, but don't be angry with me. I love you. If I did not love you I should not have come. I was not forced to come. I can't be forced to do anything but what I want to do."

"You rascal!" said Christophe, laughing in spite of himself. "And your musical projects, what about them?"

"Oh! I am still thinking about it."

"That won't take you very far."

"I want to begin now. I couldn't begin these last few months. I have had so much to do! But now you shall see how I will work, if you still want to have anything to do with me. . . ."

(He looked slyly at Christophe.)

"You are an impostor," said Christophe.

"You don't take me seriously."

"No, I don't."

"It is too dreadful. Nobody takes me seriously. I lose all heart."

"I shall take you seriously when I see you working."

"At once, then."

"I have no time now. To-morrow."

"No. To-morrow is too far off. I can't bear you to despise me for a whole day."

"You bore me."

"Please! . . ."

Smiling at his weakness, Christophe made him sit at the piano, and talked to him about music. He asked him many questions, and made him solve several little problems of harmony. Georges did not know much about it, but his musical instinct supplied the gaps of his ignorance; without knowing their names, he found the chords Christophe wanted; and even his mistakes in their awkwardness showed a curiosity of taste and a singularly acute sensibility. He did not accept Christophe's remarks without discussion; and the intelligent questions he asked in his turn bore witness to the sincerity of a mind that would not accept art as a devout formula to be repeated with the lips, but desired to live it for its own sake.—They did not only talk of music. In reference to harmony Georges would summon up pictures, the country, people. It was difficult to hold him in check: it was constantly necessary to bring him back to the middle of the road: and Christophe had not always the heart to do so. It amused him to hear the boy's joyous chatter, so full of wit and life. What a difference there was between his nature and Olivier's! With the one life was a subterranean river that flowed silently; with the other all was above ground: a capricious stream disporting itself in the sun. And yet it was the same lovely, pure water, like their eyes. With a smile, Christophe recognized in Georges certain instinctive antipathies, likings and dislikings, which he well knew, and the naïve intolerance, the generosity of heart which gives itself entirely to whatsoever it loves. . . . Only Georges loved so many things that he had no time to love any one thing for long.

He came back the next day and the days following. He was filled with a youthful passion for Christophe, and he worked enthusiastically at his lessons. . . .—Then his enthusiasm palled, his visits grew less frequent. He came less and less often. Then he came no more, and disappeared for weeks.

He was light-hearted, forgetful, naïvely selfish, and sincerely affectionate; he had a good heart and a quick intelligence which he expended piecemeal day by day. People forgave him everything because they were so glad to see him; he was happy. . . .

Christophe refused to judge him. He did not complain. He wrote to Jacqueline to thank her for having sent her son to him. Jacqueline replied with a short letter filled with restrained emotion: she expressed a hope that Christophe would be interested in Georges and help him in his life. Through shame and pride she could not bring herself to see him again. And Christophe thought he could not visit her without being invited.—So they stayed apart, seeing each other at a distance at concerts, bound together only by the boy's infrequent visits.

The winter passed. Grazia wrote but seldom. She was still faithful in her friendship for Christophe. But, like a true Italian, she was hardly at all sentimental, attached to reality, and needed to see people if she were, perhaps not to think of them, but certainly to take pleasure in talking to them. Her heart's memory needed to be supported by having her sight's memory refreshed from time to time. Her letters became brief and distant. She was as sure of Christophe as Christophe was of her. But their security gave out more light than warmth.

Christophe did not feel his new disappointments very keenly. His musical activity was enough to fill his life. When he reaches a certain age a vigorous artist lives much more in his art than in his life; his life has become the dream, his art the reality. His creative powers had been reawakened by contact with Paris. There is no stronger stimulant in the world than the sight of that city of work. The most phlegmatic natures are touched by its fever. Christophe, being rested by years of healthy solitude, brought to his work an enormous accumulation of force. Enriched by the new conquests forever being made in the fields of musical technique by the intrepid curiosity of the French, he hurled himself in his turn along the road to discovery: being more violent and barbarous than they, he went farther. But nothing in his new audacities was left to the hazardous mercies of his instinct. Christophe had begun to feel the need of clarity; all his life his genius had obeyed the

rhythm of alternate currents: it was its law to pass from one pole to the other, and to fill everything between them. Having greedily surrendered in his last period to *"the eyes of chaos shining through the veil of order,"* even to rending the veil so as to see them more clearly, he was now striving to tear himself away from their fascination, and once more to throw over the face of the sphinx the magic net of the master mind. The imperial inspiration of Rome had passed over him. Like the Parisian art of that time, by the spirit of which he was infected, he was aspiring to order. But not—like the reactionaries who spent what was left of their energies in protecting their slumber—to order in Varsovia; the good people who are always going back to Brahms—the Brahmses of all the arts, the thematics, the insipid neo-classics, in search of solace! Might one not say that they are enfeebled with passion! You are soon done for, my friends. . . . No, it is not of your order that I speak. Mine has no kinship with yours. Mine is the order in harmony of the free passions and the free will. . . . Christophe was studying how in his art to maintain the just balance between the forces of life. These new chords, the new musical daimons that he had summoned from the abyss of sounds, were used to build clear symphonies, vast, sunlit buildings, like the Italian cupola'd basilicas.

These plays and battles of the mind occupied him all winter. And the winter passed quickly, although, in the evening, as he ended his day's work and looked behind him at the tale of days, he could not have told whether it had been long or short, or whether he was still young or very old.

Then a new ray of human sunshine pierced the veil of his dreams, and once more brought in the springtime. Christophe received a letter from Grazia, telling him that she was coming to Paris with her two children. For a long time she had planned to do so. Her cousin Colette had often invited her. Her dread of the effort necessary to interrupt her habits and to tear herself away from her careless tranquillity and the home she loved in order to plunge into the Parisian whirligig that she knew so well, had made her postpone the journey from year to year. This spring she was filled with melancholy, perhaps with a secret disappointment—(how many unspoken romances there

are in the heart of a woman, unknown to others, often unconfessed to herself!)—and she longed to go right away from Rome. A threatened epidemic gave her an excuse for hurrying on her children's departure. She followed her letter to Christophe in a very few days.

Christophe hastened to her as soon as he heard she was at Colette's. He found her still absorbed and distant. He was hurt, but did not show it. By now he was almost rid of his egoism, and that gave him the insight of affection. He saw that she had some grief which she wished to conceal, and he suppressed his longing to know its nature. Only he strove to keep her amused by giving her a gay account of his misadventures and sharing with her his work and his plans, and he wrapped her round with his affection. Her mournful heart rested in the heart of her friend, and he spoke to her always of things other than that which was in both their minds. And gradually he saw the shadow of melancholy fade from her eyes, and their expression became nearly, and ever more nearly, intimate. So much so, that one day, as he was talking to her, he stopped suddenly, and in silence looked at her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"To-day," he said, "you have come back to me."

She smiled, and in a low voice she replied:

"Yes."

It was not easy for them to talk quietly together. They were very rarely alone. Colette gave them the pleasure of her presence more often than they wished. In spite of her eccentricities she was extremely kind and sincerely attached to Grazia and Christophe; but she never dreamed that she could be a nuisance to them. She had, of course, noticed—(for her eyes saw everything)—what she was pleased to call Christophe's flirtation with Grazia; flirtation was her element, and she was delighted, and asked nothing better than to encourage it. But that was precisely what she was not required to do; she was only desired not to meddle with things that did not concern her. It was enough for her to appear or to make an (indiscreet) discreet allusion to their friendship to one of them, to make Christophe and Grazia freeze and turn the conversation. Colette cast about among all the possible reasons, except one, and that the true one,

for their reserve. Fortunately for them, she could never stay long. She was always coming and going, coming in, going out, superintending everything in her house, doing a dozen things at a time. In the intervals between her appearances Christophe and Grazia, left alone with the children, would resume the thread of their innocent conversation. They never spoke of the feelings that bound them together. Unrestrainedly they confided to each other their little daily happenings. Grazia, with feminine interest, inquired into Christophe's domestic affairs. They were in a very bad way: he was always having ruptures with his housekeepers; he was continually being cheated and robbed by his servants. She laughed heartily but very kindly, and with motherly compassion for the great child's small practical sense. One day, when Colette left them after a longer visitation than usual, Grazia sighed:

"Poor Colette! I love her dearly. . . . But how she bores me!"

"I love her too," said Christophe, "if you mean by that that she bores us."

Grazia laughed:

"Listen. Will you let me . . . (it is quite impossible for us to talk in peace here) . . . will you let me come to your house one day?"

He could hardly speak.

"To my house! You will come?"

"If you don't mind?"

"Mind! Mercy, no!"

"Well, then, will you let me come on Tuesday?"

"Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, any day you like."

"Tuesday, at four. It is agreed?"

"How good of you! How good of you!"

"Wait. There is a condition."

"A condition? Why? Anything you like. You know that I will do it, condition or no condition."

"I would rather make a condition."

"I promise."

"You don't know what it is."

"I don't care. I promise. Anything you like."

"But listen. You are so obstinate."

"Tell me!"

"The condition is that between now and then you make no change in your rooms—none, you understand; everything must be left exactly as it is."

Christophe's face fell. He looked abject.

"Ah! That's not playing the game."

"You see, that's what comes of giving your word too hastily! But you promised."

"But why do you want——?

"But I want to see you in your rooms as you are, every day, when you are not expecting me."

"Surely you will let me——"

"Nothing at all. I shall allow nothing."

"At least——"

"No, no, no! I won't listen to you, or else I won't come, if you prefer it——"

"You know I would agree to anything if you will only come."

"Then you promise."

"Yes."

"On your word of honor?"

"Yes, you tyrant."

"A good tyrant."

"There is no such thing as a good tyrant: there are tyrants whom one loves and tyrants whom one detests."

"And I am both?"

"No. You are one of the first."

"It is very humiliating."

On the appointed day she came. With scrupulous loyalty Christophe had not dared even to arrange the smallest piece of paper in his untidy rooms: he would have felt dishonored had he done so. But he was in torture. He was ashamed of what his friend would think. Anxiously he awaited her arrival. She came punctually, not more than four or five minutes after the hour. She climbed up the stairs with her light, firm step. She rang. He was at the door and opened it. She was dressed with easy, graceful elegance. Through her veil he could see her tranquil eyes. They said "Good-day" in a whisper and shook hands: she was more silent than usual: he was awkward

and emotional and said nothing, to avoid showing his feeling. He led her in without uttering the sentence he had prepared by way of excusing the untidiness of his room. She sat down in the best chair, and he sat near her.

"This is my work-room."

It was all he could find to say to her.

There was a silence. She looked round slowly, with a kindly smile, and she, too, was much moved, though she would not admit it to herself. (Later she told him that when she was a girl she had thought of coming to him, but had been afraid as she reached the door.) She was struck by the solitary aspect and the sadness of the place: the dark, narrow hall, the absolute lack of comfort, the visible poverty, all went to her heart: she was filled with affectionate pity for her old friend, who, in spite of all his work and his sufferings and his celebrity, was unable to shake free of material anxiety. And at the same time she was amused at the absolute indifference revealed by the bareness of the room that had no carpets, no pictures, no bric-à-brac, no armchair; no other furniture than a table, three hard chairs, and a piano: and papers, papers everywhere, mixed up with books, on the table, under the table, on the floor, on the piano, on the chairs—(she smiled as she thought how conscientiously he had kept his word).

After a minute or two she asked him, pointing to his place at the table:

"Is that where you work?"

"No," he said. "There."

He pointed to the darkest corner of the room, where there stood a low chair with its back to the light. She went and sat in it quietly, without a word. For a few minutes they were silent, for they knew not what to say. He got up and went to the piano. He played and improvised for half an hour; all around him he felt the presence of his beloved and an immense happiness filled his heart; with eyes closed he played marvelous things. Then she understood the beauty of the room, all furnished with divine harmonies: she heard his loving, suffering heart as though it were beating in her own bosom.

When the music had died away, he stopped for a little while, quite still, at the piano: then he turned as he heard the breath

of his beloved and knew that she was weeping. She came to him.

"Thank you!" she murmured, and took his hand.

Her lips were trembling a little. She closed her eyes. He did the same. For a few seconds they remained so, hand in hand; and time stopped; it seemed to them that for ages, ages, they had been lying pressed close together.

She opened her eyes, and to shake off her emotion, she asked: "May I see the rest of the flat?"

Glad also to escape from his emotions, he opened the door into the next room; but at once he was ashamed. It contained a narrow, hard iron bed.

On the wall there was a cast of the mask of Beethoven, and near the bed, in a cheap frame, photographs of his mother and Olivier. On the dressing-table was another photograph: Grazia herself as a child of fifteen. He had found it in her album in Rome, and had stolen it. He confessed it, and asked her to forgive him. She looked at the face, and said:

"Can you recognize me in it?"

"I can recognize you, and remember you."

"Which of the two do you love best?" she asked, pointing to herself.

"You are always the same. I love you always just the same. I recognize you everywhere. Even in the photograph of you as a tiny child. You do not know the emotion I feel as in this chrysalis I discern your soul. Nothing so clearly assures me that you are eternal. I loved you before you were born, and I shall love you ever after. . . ."

He stopped. She stood still and made no answer: she was filled with the sweet sorrow of love. When she returned to the work-room, and he had shown her through the window his little friendly tree, full of chattering sparrows, she said:

"Now, do you know what we will do? We will have a feast. I brought tea and cakes because I knew you would have nothing of the kind. And I brought something else. Give me your overcoat."

"My overcoat?"

"Yes. Give it me."

She took needles and cotton from her bag.

"What are you going to do?"

"There were two buttons the other day which made me tremble for their fate. Where are they now?"

"True. I never thought of sewing them on. It is so tiresome!"

"Poor boy! Give it me."

"I am ashamed."

"Go and make tea."

He brought the kettle and the spirit-lamp into the room, so as not to miss a moment of his friend's stay. As she sewed she watched his clumsy ways stealthily and maliciously. They drank their tea out of cracked cups, which she thought horrible, dodging the cracks, while he indignantly defended them, because they reminded him of his life with Olivier.

Just as she was going, he asked:

"You are not angry with me?"

"Why should I be?"

"Because of the litter here?"

She laughed.

"I will make it tidy."

As she reached the threshold and was just going to open the door, he knelt and kissed her feet.

"What are you doing?" she said. "You foolish, foolish dear! Good-by!"

They agreed that she should come once a week on a certain day. She had made him promise that there should be no more outbursts, no more kneelings, no more kissing of her feet. She breathed forth such a gentle tranquillity, that even when Christophe was in his most violent mood, he was influenced by it; and although when he was alone, he often thought of her with passionate desire, when they were together they were always like good comrades. Never did word or gesture escape him which could disturb his friend's peace.

On Christophe's birthday she dressed her little girl as she herself had been when they first met in the old days; and she made the child play the piece that Christophe used to make her play.

But all her grace and tenderness and sweet friendship were

mingled with contradictory feelings. She was frivolous, and loved society, and delighted in being courted, even by fools; she was a coquette, except with Christophe,—even with Christophe. When he was very tender with her, she would be deliberately cold and reserved. When he was cold and reserved she would become tender and tease him affectionately. She was the most honest of women. But even in the most honest and the best of women there is always a girl. She insisted on standing well with the world, and conformed to the conventions. She had fine musical gifts, and understood Christophe's work; but she was not much interested in it—(and he knew it).—To a true Latin woman, art is of worth only in proportion as it leads back to life, to life and love. . . . The love which is forever seething, slumbering, in the depths of the voluptuous body. . . . What has she to do with the tragic meditations, the tormented symphonies, the intellectual passions of the North? She must have music in which her hidden desires can unfold, with the minimum of effort, an opera, which is passionate life without the fatigue of the passions, a sentimental, sensual, lazy art.

She was weak and changing: she could only apply herself intermittently to any serious study: she must have amusement; rarely did she do on the morrow what she had decided to do the night before. She had so many childish ways, so many little disconcerting caprices! The restless nature of woman, her morbid and periodically unreasonable character. She knew it and then tried to isolate herself. She knew her weaknesses, and blamed herself for her failure to resist them, since they distressed her friend; sometimes, without his knowing it, she made real sacrifices for him; but, when all was told, her nature was the stronger. For the rest, Grazia could not bear Christophe to seem to be commanding her; and, once or twice, by way of asserting her independence, she did the opposite of what he asked her. At once she regretted it; at night she would be filled with remorse that she could not make Christophe happier; she loved him more than she would let him see; she felt that her friendship with him was the best part of her life. As usually happens with two very different people, they were more united when they were not together. In truth,

if they had been thrust apart by a misunderstanding, the fault was not altogether Christophe's, as he honestly believed. Even when in the old days Grazia most dearly loved Christophe, would she have married him? She would perhaps have given him her life; but would she have so given herself as to live all her life with him? She knew (though she did not confess it to Christophe) that she had loved her husband, and, even now, after all the harm he had done her, loved him as she had never loved Christophe. . . . The secrets of the heart, the secrets of the body, of which one is not very proud, and hides from those dear to one, as much out of respect for them, as in complacent pity for oneself. . . . Christophe was too masculine to divine them: but every now and then, in flashes, he would see how little the woman he most dearly loved, who truly loved him, belonged to him—and that he could not wholly count on any one, on any one, in life. His love was not quenched by this perception. He even felt no bitterness. Grazia's peace spread over him. He accepted everything. O life, why should I reproach thee for that which thou canst not give? Art thou not very beautiful and very blessed as thou art? I must fain love thy smile, Gioconda. . . .

Christophe would gaze at his beloved's beautiful face, and read in it many things of the past and the future. During the long years when he had lived alone, traveling, speaking little but seeing much, he had acquired, almost unconsciously, the power of reading the human face, that rich and complex language formed by the ages. It is a thousand times richer and more complex than the spoken language. The spirit of the race is expressed in it. . . . There are perpetual contrasts between the lines of the face and the words that come from it. Take the profile of a girl, clear-cut, a little hard, in the Burne-Jones style, tragic, consumed by a secret passion, jealousy, a Shakespearian sorrow. . . . She speaks: and, behold, she is a little bourgeois creature, as stupid as an owl, a selfish, commonplace coquette, with no idea of the terrible forces inscribed upon her body. And yet such passion, such violence are in her. In what shape will they one day spring forth? Will it be in the lust of gain, conjugal jealousy, or splendid energy, or morbid wickedness? There is no knowing. It may be that she will

transmit them to another creature of her blood before the time comes for the eruption. But it is an element with which we have to reckon as, like a fatality, it hovers above the race.

Grazia also bore the weight of that uneasy heritage, which, of all the patrimony of ancient families, is the least in danger of being dissipated in transit. She, at least, was aware of it. It is a great source of strength to know our weakness, to make ourselves, if not the masters, the pilots of the soul of the race to which we are bound, which bears us like a vessel upon its waters,—to make fate our instrument, to use it as a sail which we furl or clew up according to the wind. When Grazia closed her eyes, she could hear within herself more than one disturbing voice, of a tone familiar to her. But in her healthy soul even the dissonances were blended to form a profound, soft music, under the guiding hand of her harmonious reason.

Unhappily it is not within our power to transmit the best of our blood to the creatures of our blood.

Of Grazia's two children, the little girl, Aurora, who was eleven years old, was like her mother; she was not so pretty, being a little coarser in fiber; she had a slight limp; she was a good little girl, affectionate and gay, with splendid health, abundant good nature, few natural gifts, except idleness, a passion for doing nothing. Christophe adored her. When he saw her with Grazia he felt the charm of a twofold creature, seen at two ages of life, two generations together. . . . Two flowers upon one stem; a Holy Family of Leonardo, the Virgin and Saint Anne, different shades of the same smile. With one glance he could take in the whole blossoming of a woman's soul; and it was at once fair and sad to see: he could see whence it came and whither it was going. There is nothing more natural than for an ardent, chaste heart to love two sisters at one and the same time, or mother and daughter. Christophe would have loved the woman of his love through all her descendants, just as in her he loved the stock of which she came. Her every smile, her every tear, every line in her face, were they not living beings, the memories of a life which was before her eyes opened to the light, the forerunners of a life which was to come, when her eyes should be forever closed?

The little boy, Lionello, was nine. He was much handsomer than his sister, of a finer stock, too fine, worn out and bloodless, wherein he was like his father. He was intelligent, well-endowed with bad instincts, demonstrative, and dissembling. He had big blue eyes, long, girlish, fair hair, a pale complexion, a delicate chest, and was morbidly nervous, which last, being a born comedian and strangely skilled in discovering people's weaknesses, he upon occasion turned to good account. Grazia was inclined to favor him, with the natural preference of a mother for her least healthy child,—and also through the attraction which all kindly, good women feel for the sons who are neither well nor ill (for in them a part of their life which they have suppressed finds solace). In such attraction there is something of the memory of the husbands who have made them suffer, whom they loved even while they despised them, or the strange flora of the soul, which wax strong in the dark, humid hot-house of conscience.

In spite of Grazia's care equally to bestow her tenderness upon her children, Aurora felt the difference, and was a little hurt by it. Christophe divined her feeling, and she divined Christophe's: they came together instinctively; while between Christophe and Lionello there was an antipathy which the boy covered up with exaggerated, lisping, charming ways,—and Christophe thrust from him as a shameful feeling. He wrestled with himself and forced himself to cherish this other man's child as though he were the child whom it would have been ineffably sweet for him to have had by the beloved. He would not allow himself to see Lionello's bad nature or anything that could remind him of the "other man": he set himself to find in him only Grazia. She, more clear-sighted, was under no illusions about her son, and she only loved him the more.

However, the disease which for years had been lying dormant in the boy broke out. Consumption supervened. Grazia resolved to go and shut herself up in a sanatorium in the Alps with Lionello. Christophe begged to be allowed to go with her. To avoid scandal she dissuaded him. He was hurt by the excessive importance which she attached to the conventions.

She went away and left her daughter with Colette. It was

not long before she began to feel terribly lonely among the sick people who talked of nothing but their illness, surrounded by the pitiless mountains rising above the rags and tatters of men. To escape from the depressing spectacle of the invalids with their spittoons spying upon each other and marking the progress of death over each one of them, she left the Palace hospital, and took a chalet, where she lived aloof with her own little invalid. Instead of improving Lionello's condition, the high altitude aggravated it. His fever waxed greater. Grazia spent nights of anguish. Christophe knew it by his keen intuition, although she told him nothing: for she was growing more and more rigid in her pride; she longed for Christophe to be with her, but she had forbidden him to follow her, and she could not bring herself to confess: "I am too weak, I need you. . . ."

One evening, as she stood in the veranda of the chalet in the twilight hour, which is so bitter for hearts in agony, she saw . . . she thought she saw coming up from the station of the funicular railway . . . a man walking hurriedly: he stopped, hesitating, with his back a little bowed. She went indoors to avoid his seeing her: she held her hands over her heart, and, quivering with emotion, she laughed. Although she was not at all religious she knelt down, hid her face in her hands; she felt the need of thanking some one. . . . But he did not come. She went back to the window, and, hiding behind the curtains, looked out. He had stopped, leaning against a fence round a field, near the gate of the chalet. He dared not enter. And, even more perturbed than he, she smiled, and said in a low voice:

"Come . . ."

At last he made up his mind and rang the bell. Already she was at the door, and she opened it. His eyes looked at her like the eyes of a faithful dog, who is afraid of being beaten. He said:

"I came. . . . Forgive me. . . ."

She said:

"Thank you."

Then she confessed how she had expected him. Christophe helped her to nurse the boy, whose condition was growing worse.

His heart was in the task. The boy treated him with irritable animosity: he took no pains now to conceal it: he said many malicious things to him. Christophe put it all down to his illness. He was extraordinarily patient. He passed many painful days by the boy's bedside, until the critical night, on passing through which, Lionello, whom they had given up for lost, was saved. And they felt then such pure happiness—watching hand in hand over the little invalid—that suddenly she got up, took her cloak and hood, and led Christophe out of doors, along the road, in the snow, the silence and the night, under the cold stars. Leaning on his arm, excitedly breathing in the frozen peace of the world, they hardly spoke at all. They made no allusion to their love. Only when they returned, on the threshold, she said:

"My dear, dear friend! . . ."

And her eyes were lit up by the happiness of having saved her child.

That was all. But they felt that the bond between them had become sacred.

On her return to Paris after Lionello's long convalescence, she took a little house at Passy, and did not worry any more about "avoiding scandal": she felt brave enough to dare opinion for her friend's sake. Their life henceforth was so intimately linked that it would have seemed cowardly to her to conceal the friendship which united them at the—inevitable—risk of having it slandered. She received Christophe at all hours of the day, and was seen with him out walking and at the theater: she spoke familiarly to him in company. Colette thought they were making themselves too conspicuous. Grazia would stop her hints with a smile, and quietly go her way.

And yet she had given Christophe no new right over her. They were nothing more than friends: he always addressed her with the same affectionate respect. But they hid nothing from each other: they consulted each other about everything: and insensibly Christophe assumed a sort of paternal authority in the house: Grazia listened to and followed his advice. She was no longer the same woman since the winter she had spent in the sanatorium; the anxiety and fatigue had seriously tried her

health, which, till then, had been sturdy. Her soul was affected by it. In spite of an occasional lapse into her old caprices, she had become mysteriously more serious, more reflective, and was more constantly desirous of being kind, of learning and not hurting any one. Every day saw her more softened by Christophe's affection, his disinterestedness, and the purity of his heart: and she was thinking of one day giving him the great happiness of which he no longer dared to dream, that of becoming his wife.

He had never broached the subject again after her first refusal, for he thought he had no right to do so. But regretfully he clung to his impossible hope. Though he respected what his friend had said, he was not convinced by her disillusioned attitude towards marriage: he persisted in believing that the union of two people who love each other, profoundly and devotedly, is the height of human happiness.—His regrets were revived by coming in contact once more with the Arnauds.

Madame Arnaud was more than fifty. Her husband was sixty-five or sixty-six. Both seemed to be older. He had grown stout: she was very thin and rather shrunken: spare though she had been in the old days, she was now just a wisp of a woman. After Arnaud's retirement they had gone to live in a house in the country. They had no link with the life of the time save the newspaper, which in the torpor of their little town and their drowsy life brought them the tardy echo of the voice of the world. Once they saw Christophe's name. Madame Arnaud wrote him a few affectionate, rather ceremonious words, to tell him how glad they were of his fame. He took the train at once without letting them know.

He found them in the garden, dozing under the round canopy of an ash, on a warm summer afternoon. They were like Boecklin's old couple, sleeping hand in hand, in an arbor. Sun, sleep, old age overwhelm them: they are falling, they are already half-buried in the eternal dream. And, as the last gleam of their life, their tenderness persists to the end. The clasp of their hands, the dying warmth of their bodies. . . .—They were delighted to see Christophe, for the sake of all the memories of the past he brought with him. They talked of the old days, which at that distance seemed brilliant and full of light.

Arnaud loved talking, but he had lost his memory for names. Madame Arnaud whispered them to him. She liked saying nothing and preferred listening to talking: but the image of the old times had been kept alive and clear in her silent heart: in glimmers they would appear sharply before her like shining pebbles in a stream. There was one such memory that Christophe more than once saw reflected in her eyes as she looked at him with affectionate compassion: but Olivier's name was not pronounced. Old Arnaud plied his wife with touching, awkward little attentions; he was fearful lest she should catch cold, or be too hot; he would gaze hungrily with anxious love at her dear, faded face, and with a weary smile she would try to reassure him. Christophe watched them tenderly, with a little envy. . . . To grow old together. To love in the dear companion even the wear of time. To say: "I know those lines round her eyes and nose. I have seen them coming. I know when they came. Her scant gray hair has lost its color, day by day, in my company, something because of me, alas! Her sweet face has swollen and grown red in the fires of the weariness and sorrow that have consumed us. My soul, how much better I love thee for that thou hast suffered and grown old with me. Every one of thy wrinkles is to me as music from the past. . . ." The charm of these old people, who, after the long vigil of life, spent side by side, go side by side to sleep in the peace of the night! To see them was both sweet and profitable and sorrowful for Christophe. Oh! How lovely had life and death been thus! . . .

When he next saw Grazia, he could not help telling her of his visit. He did not tell her of the thoughts roused in him by his visit. But she divined them. He was tender and wistful as he spoke. He turned his eyes away from her and was silent every now and then. She looked at him and smiled, and Christophe's unease infected her.

That evening, when she was alone in her room, she lay dreaming. She went over the story Christophe had told her: but the image she saw through it was not that of the old couple sleeping under the ash: it was the shy, ardent dream of her friend. And her heart was filled with love for him. She lay in the dark and thought:

"Yes. It is absurd, criminal and absurd, to waste the opportunity for such happiness. What joy in the world can equal the joy of making the man you love happy? . . . What! Do I love him? . . ."

She was silent, deeply moved, listening to the answer of her heart.

"I love him."

Just then a dry, hard, hasty cough came from the next room where the children were sleeping. Grazia pricked her ears: since the boy's illness she had always been anxious. She called out to him. He made no reply, and went on coughing. She sprang from her bed and went to him. He was irritated, and moaned, and said that he was not well, and broke out coughing again.

"What is the matter?"

He did not reply, but only groaned that he was ill.

"My darling, please tell me what is the matter?"

"I don't know."

"Is it here?"

"Yes. No. I don't know. I am ill all over."

On that he had a fresh fit of coughing, violent and exaggerated. Grazia was alarmed: she had a feeling that he was forcing himself to cough: but she was ashamed of her thought, as she saw the boy sweating and choking for breath. She kissed him and spoke to him tenderly: he seemed to grow calmer; but as soon as she tried to leave him he broke out coughing again. She had to stay shivering by his bedside, for he would not even allow her to go away to dress herself, and insisted on her holding his hand; and he would not let her go until he fell asleep again. Then she went to bed, chilled, uneasy, harassed. And she found it impossible to gather up the threads of her dreams.

The boy had a singular power of reading his mother's thoughts. This instinctive genius is often—though seldom in such a high degree—to be found in creatures of the same stock: they hardly need to look at each other to know each other's thoughts: they can guess them by the breathing, by a thousand imperceptible signs. This natural aptness, which is fortified by living together, was in Lionello sharpened and refined by his ever wake-

ful malevolence. He had the insight of the desire to hurt. He detested Christophe. Why? Why does a child take a dislike to a person who has never done him any harm? It is often a matter of chance. It is enough for a child to have begun by persuading himself that he detests some one, for it to become a habit, and the more he is argued with the more desperately he will cling to it. But often, again, there are deeper reasons for it, which pass the child's understanding: he has no idea of them. . . . From the first moment when he saw Christophe, the son of Count Berény had a feeling of animosity towards the man whom his mother had loved. It was as though he had instinctively felt the exact moment when Grazia began to think of marrying Christophe. From that moment on he never ceased to spy upon them. He was always between them, and refused to leave the room whenever Christophe came: or he would manage to burst in upon them when they were sitting together. More than that, when his mother was alone, thinking of Christophe, he seemed to divine her thoughts. He would sit near her and watch her. His gaze would embarrass her and almost make her blush. She would get up to conceal her unease.—He would take a delight in saying unkind things about Christophe in her presence. She would bid him be silent, but he would go on. And if she tried to punish him, he would threaten to make himself ill. That was the strategy he had always used successfully since he was a child. When he was quite small, one day when he had been scolded, he had, out of revenge, undressed himself and lain naked on the floor so as to catch cold.—Once, when Christophe brought a piece of music that he had composed for Grazia's birthday, the boy took the manuscript and hid it. It was found in tatters in a wood-box. Grazia lost her patience and scolded him severely. Then he wept and howled, and stamped his feet, and rolled on the ground, and had an attack of nerves. Grazia was terrified, and kissed and implored him, and promised to do whatever he wanted.

From that day on he was the master: for he knew it: and very frequently he had recourse to the weapon with which he had succeeded. There was never any knowing how far his attacks were natural and how far counterfeit. Soon he was not satisfied with using them vengefully when he was opposed

in any way, but took to using them out of spite whenever his mother and Christophe planned to spend the evening together. He even went so far as to play his dangerous game out of sheer idleness, or theatricality, to discover the extent of his power. He was extraordinarily ingenious in inventing strange, nervous accidents; sometimes in the middle of dinner he would be seized with a convulsive trembling, and upset his glass or break his plate; sometimes, as he was going upstairs, he would clutch at the banisters with his hand: his fingers would stiffen: he would pretend that he could not open them again; or he would have a sharp pain in his side and roll about, howling; or he would choke. Of course, in the end he developed a genuine nervous illness. Christophe and Grazia were at their wits' end. Their peaceful meetings—their quiet talks, their readings, their music, which were as a festival to them—all their humble happiness was henceforth disturbed.

Every now and then, however, the little imp would give them a respite, partly because he was tired of his play-acting, partly because his child's nature took possession of him again, and made him think of something else. (He was sure now that he had won the day.)

Then, quickly, quietly, they would seize their opportunity. Every hour that they could steal in this way was the more precious to them as they could never be sure of enjoying it to the end. How near they felt to each other! Why could they not always be so! . . . One day Grazia herself confessed to her regret. Christophe took her hand.

"Yes. Why?" he asked.

"You know why, my dear," she said, with a miserable smile.

Christophe knew. He knew that she was sacrificing their happiness to her son: he knew that she was not deceived by Lionello's lies, that she still adored him: he knew the blind egoism of such domestic affections which make the best pour out their reserves of devotion to the advantage of the bad or mediocre creatures of their blood, so that there is nothing left for them to give to those who would be more worthy, whom they love best, but who are not of their blood. And although he was irritated by it, although there were times when he longed to kill the little monster who was destroying their lives,

yet he bowed his head in silence, and understood that Grazia could not do otherwise.

So they renounced their life without vain recrimination. But if the happiness which was their right could be snatched from them, nothing could prevent the union of their hearts. Their very renunciation, their common sacrifice, held them by bonds stronger than those of the flesh. Each confided the sorrow of it all to the other, passed over the burden of it, and took on the other's suffering: so even their sorrow became joy. Christophe called Grazia "his confessor." He did not hide from her the weaknesses from which his pride had to suffer: rather he accused himself with too great contrition, and she would smilingly soothe his boyish scruples. He even confessed to her his material poverty; but he could only bring himself to do that after it had been agreed between them that she should neither offer him, nor he accept from her, any help. It was the last barrier of pride which he upheld and she respected. In place of the well-being which she could not bring into her friend's life, she found many ways of filling it with what was infinitely more precious to him—namely, her tenderness. He felt the breath of it all about him, during every hour of the day: he never opened his eyes in the morning, never closed them at night, without a prayer of love and adoration. And when she awoke, or at night, as often happened, lay for hours without sleeping, she thought:

"My dear is thinking of me."

And a great peace came upon them and surrounded them.

However, her health had given way. Grazia was constantly in bed, or had to spend the day lying on a sofa. Christophe used to go every day and read to her, and show her his new work. Then she would get up from the chair, and limp to the piano, for her feet were swollen. She would play the music he had brought. It was the greatest joy she could give him. Of all his pupils she and Cécile were the most gifted. But while Cécile had an instinctive feeling for music, with hardly any understanding of it, to Grazia it was a lovely harmonious language full of meaning for her. The demoniac quality in life and art escaped her altogether: she brought to bear on it

the clarity of her intelligence and heart. Christophe's genius was saturated with her clarity. His friend's playing helped him to understand the obscure passions he had expressed. With closed eyes he would listen, and follow her, and hold her by the hand, as she led him through the maze of his own thoughts. By living in his music through Grazia's soul, he was wedded to her soul and possessed it. From this mysterious conjugation sprang music which was the fruit of the mingling of their lives. One day, as he brought her a collection of his works, woven of his substance and hers, he said:

"Our children."

Theirs was an unbroken communion whether they were together or apart; sweet were the evenings spent in the peace and quiet of the old house, which was a fit setting for the image of Grazia, where the silent, cordial servants, who were devoted to Christophe, extended to him a little of the respectful affection they had for their mistress. Joyous was it to listen to the song of the fleeting hours, and to see the tide of life ebbing away. . . . A shadow of anxiety was thrown on their happiness by Grazia's failing health. But, in spite of her little infirmities, she was so serene that her hidden sufferings did but heighten her charm. She was his *"liebe, leidende, und doch so rührende, heitre Freundin"* ("his dear, suffering, touching friend, always so bright and cheerful"). And sometimes, in the evening, when he left her with his heart big with love so that he could not wait until the morrow, he would write:

"Liebe, liebe, liebe, liebe, liebe Grazia. . . ."

Their tranquillity lasted for months. They thought it would last forever. The boy seemed to have forgotten them: his attention was distracted by other things. But after this respite he returned to them and never left them again. The horrible little boy had determined to part his mother and Christophe. He resumed his play-acting. He did not set about it upon any premeditated plan, but, from day to day, followed the whimsies of his spite. He had no idea of the harm he might be doing: he only wanted to amuse himself by boring other people. He never relaxed his efforts until he had made Grazia promise to leave Paris and go on a long journey. Grazia had no strength to resist him. Besides, the doctors advised her to pay a visit to

Egypt. She had to avoid another winter in the northern climate. Too many things had tried her health: the moral upheaval of the last few years, the perpetual anxiety about her son's health, the long periods of uncertainty, the struggle that had taken place in her without her giving any sign of it, the sorrow of sorrows that she was inflicting on her friend. To avoid adding to the trouble he divined in her, Christophe hid his own grief at the approach of the day of parting: he made no effort to postpone it; and they were outwardly calm, and, though inwardly they were very far from it, yet they succeeded in forcing it upon each other.

The day came. A September morning. They had left Paris together in the middle of July, and spent their last weeks in Switzerland in a mountain hotel, near the place where they had met again six years ago.

They were unable to go out the last five days: the rain came down in unceasing torrents: they were almost alone in the hotel, for all the other travelers had fled. The rain stopped on their last morning, but the mountains were still covered with clouds. The children went on ahead with the servants in another carriage. She drove off. He accompanied her to the place where the road began to descend in steep windings to the plain of Italy. The mist came in under the hood of the carriage. They were very close together, and they said no word: they hardly looked at each other. A strange light, half-day, half-night, wrapped them round. . . . Grazia's breath left little drops of water on her veil. He pressed her little hand, warm under her cold glove. Their faces came together. Through her wet veil he kissed her dear lips.

They came to the turn of the road. He got down, and the carriage plunged on into the mist and disappeared. For a long time he could hear the rumbling of the wheels and the horses' hoofs. Great masses of white mist rolled over the fields. Through the close tracery of the branches the dripping trees dropped water. Not a breath of wind. The mist was stifling life. Christophe stopped, choking. . . . There was nothing now. Everything had gone. . . .

He took in a long breath, filling his lungs with the mist, and walked on. Nothing passes for him who does not pass.

III

Absence adds to the power of those we love. The heart retains only what is dear to us in them. The echo of each word coming through space from the distant friend, rings out in the silence, faithfully answering.

The correspondence of Christophe and Grazia took on the serious and restrained tone of a couple who are no longer in the dangerous period of trial of love, but, having passed it, feel sure of the road and march on hand in hand. Each was strong to sustain and direct the other, weak and yielding to the other's support and direction.

Christophe returned to Paris. He had vowed never to go there again. But what are such vows worth? He knew that he would find there the shade of Grazia. And circumstances, conspiring with his secret desires against his will, showed him a new duty to fulfil in Paris. Colette, well informed as to society gossip, told Christophe that his young friend Jeannin was making a fool of himself. Jacqueline, who had always been weak in her dealings with her son, could not hold him in check. She herself was passing through a strange crisis, and was too much occupied with herself to pay much heed to him.

Since the unhappy adventure which had destroyed Olivier's marriage and life, Jacqueline had lived a very worthy life. She withdrew from Parisian society, which, after imposing on her a hypocritical sort of quarantine, had made fresh advances to her, which she had rejected. She was not at all ashamed of what she had done as far as these people were concerned: she thought she had no reason to account to them for it, for they were more worthless than she: what she had done openly, half the women she knew did by stealth, under cover of their homes. She suffered only from the thought of the wrong she had done her nearest and dearest, the only man she had loved. She could not forgive herself for having, in so poor a world, lost an affection like his.

Her regrets, and her sorrow, grew less acute with time. There were left only a sort of mute suffering, a humiliated contempt

for herself and others, and the love of her child. This affection, into which she poured all her need of love, disarmed her before him; she could not resist Georges's caprices. To excuse her weakness she persuaded herself that she was paying for the wrong she had done Olivier. She had alternate periods of exalted tenderness and weary indifference: sometimes she would worry Georges with her exacting, anxious love, and sometimes she would seem to tire of him, and she let him do as he liked. She admitted to herself that she was bringing him up badly, and she would torment herself with the admission; but she made no change. When, as she rarely did, she tried to model her principles of conduct on Olivier's way of thinking, the result was deplorable. At heart she wished to have no authority over her son save that of her affection. And she was not wrong: for between these two, however similar they might be, there were no bonds save those of the heart. Georges Jeannin was sensible of his mother's physical charm: he loved her voice, her gestures, her movements, her grace, her love. But in mind he was conscious of strangerhood to her. She only saw it as he began to grow into a man, when he turned from her. Then she was amazed and indignant, and attributed the estrangement to other feminine influences: and, as she tried awkwardly to combat them, she only estranged him more. In reality, they had always lived, side by side, each preoccupied with totally different interests, deceiving themselves as to the gulf that lay between them, with the aid of their common surface sympathies and antipathies, which disappeared when the man began to spring forth from the boy (that ambiguous creature, still impregnated with the perfume of womanhood). And bitterly Jacqueline would say to her son:

"I don't know whom you take after. You are not like your father or me."

So she made him feel all that lay between them; and he took a secret pride that was yet feverish and uneasy.

The younger generation has always a keener sense than the elder of the things that lie between them; they need to gain assurance of the importance of their existence, even at the cost of injustice or of lying to themselves. But this feeling varies in its acuteness from one period to another. In the classic ages

when, for a time, the balance of the forces of a civilization are realized,—those high plateaux ending on all sides with steep slopes—the difference in level is not so great from one generation to another. But in the ages of renascence or decadence, the young men climbing or plunging down the giddy slopes, leave their predecessors far behind.—Georges, like the other young men of his time, was ascending the mountain.

He was superior neither in character nor in mind: he had many aptitudes, none of which rose above the level of elegant mediocrity. And yet, without any effort on his part, he found himself at the outset of his career several grades higher than his father, who, in his short life, had expended an incalculable amount of intellect and energy.

Hardly were the eyes of his mind opened upon the light of day than he saw all round him the heaped-up darkness, pierced by luminous gleams, the masses of knowledge and ignorance, warring truths, contradictory errors, in which his father and the men of his father's generation had feverishly groped their way. But at the same time he became conscious of a weapon in his power which they had never known: his force. . . .

Whence did he have it? . . . Who can tell the mystery of the resurrections of a race, sleeping, worn out, which suddenly awakes brimming like a mountain torrent in the spring! . . . What would he do with his force? Use it in his turn to explore the inextricable thickets of modern thought? They had no attraction for him. He was oppressed by the menacing dangers which lurked in them. They had crushed his father. Rather than renew that experience and enter the tragic forest he would have set fire to it. He had only to glance at the books of wisdom or sacred folly which had intoxicated Olivier: the Nihilist pity of Tolstoi, the somber destructive pride of Ibsen, the frenzy of Nietzsche, the heroic, sensual pessimism of Wagner. He had turned away from them in anger and terror. He hated the realistic writers who, for half a century, had killed the joy of art. He could not, however, altogether blot out the shadows of the sorrowful dream in which he had been cradled. He would not look behind him, but he well knew that the shadow was there. He was too healthy to seek a counter-irritant to his uneasiness in the lazy skepticism of the preceding epoch:

he detested the dilettantism of men like Renan and Anatole France, with their degradation of the free intellect, their joyless mirth, their irony without greatness: a shameful method, fit for slaves, playing with the chains which they are impotent to break.

He was too vigorous to be satisfied with doubt, too weak to create the conviction which, with all his soul, he desired. He asked for it, prayed for it, demanded it. And the eternal snappers-up of popularity, the great writers, the sham thinkers at bay, exploited this imperious and agonized desire, by beating the drums and shouting the clap-trap of their nostrum. From trestles, each of these Hippocrates bawled that his was the only true elixir, and decried all the rest. Their secrets were all equally worthless. None of these pedlars had taken the trouble to find a new recipe. They had hunted about among their old empty bottles. The panacea of one was the Catholic Church: another's was legitimate monarchy: yet another's, the classic tradition. There were queer fellows who declared that the remedy for all evils lay in the return to Latin. Others seriously prognosticated, with an enormous word which imposed on the herd, the domination of the Mediterranean spirit. (They would have been just as ready at some other time to talk of the 'Atlantic spirit.) Against the barbarians of the North and the East they pompously set up the heirs of a new Roman Empire. . . . Words, words, all second-hand. The refuse of the libraries scattered to the winds.—Like all his comrades, young Jeannin went from one showman to another, listened to their patter, was sometimes taken in by it, and entered the booth, only to come out disappointed and rather ashamed of having spent his time and his money in watching old clowns buffooning in shabby rags. And yet, such is youth's power of illusion, such was his certainty of gaining certainty, that he was always taken in by each new promise of each new vendor of hope. He was very French, of a hypercritical temper, and an innate lover of order. He needed a leader and could bear none; his pitiless irony always riddled them through and through.

While he was waiting for the advent of a leader who should give him the key to the riddle . . . he had no time to wait. He was not the kind of man, like his father, to be satisfied

with the lifelong search for truth. With or without a motive, he needed always to make up his mind, to act, to turn to account, to use his energy. Traveling, the delight of art, and especially of music, with which he had gorged himself, had at first been to him an intermittent and passionate diversion. He was handsome, ardent, precocious, beset with temptations, and he early discovered the outwardly enchanting world of love, and plunged into it with an unbridled, poetic, greedy joy. Then this impertinently naïve and insatiable cherub wearied of women: he needed action, so he gave himself up uncontrollably to sport. He tried everything, practised everything. He was always going to fencing and boxing matches: he was the French champion runner and high-jumper, and captain of a football team. He competed with a number of other crazy, reckless, rich young men like himself in ridiculous, wild motor races. Finally he threw up everything for the latest fad, and was drawn into the popular craze for flying machines. At the Rheims meetings he shouted and wept for joy with three hundred thousand other men; he felt that he was one with the whole people in a religious jubilation; the human birds flying over their heads bore them upwards in their flight: for the first time since the dawn of the great Revolution the vast multitude had raised their eyes to the heavens and seen them open.—To his mother's terror young Jeannin declared that he was going to throw in his lot with the conquerors of the air. Jacqueline implored him to give up his perilous ambition. She ordered him to do so. He took the bit between his teeth. Christophe, in whom Jacqueline thought she had found an ally, only gave the boy a little prudent advice, which he felt quite sure Georges would not follow (for, in his place, he would not have done so). He did not deem that he had any right,—even had he been able to do so—to fetter the healthy and normal expansion of the boy's vitality, which, if it had been forced into inaction, would have been perverted to his destruction.

Jacqueline could not reconcile herself to seeing her son leave her. She had vainly thought that she had renounced love, for she could not do without the illusion of love; all her affections, all her actions were tinged with it. There are so many mothers who expend on their sons all the secret ardor which they have

been unable to give forth in marriage—or out of it! And when they see how easily their sons do without them, when suddenly they understand that they are not necessary to them, they go through the same kind of crisis as befalls them upon the betrayal of a lover, or the disillusion of love.—Once more Jacqueline's whole existence crumbled away. Georges saw nothing. Young people never have any idea of the tragedies of the heart going on around them: they have no time to stop and see them: and they do not wish to see: a selfish instinct bids them march straight on without looking to right or left.

Jacqueline was left alone to gulp down this new sorrow. She only emerged from it when her grief was worn out, worn out like her love. She still loved her son, but with a distant, disillusioned affection, which she knew to be futile, and she lost all interest in herself and him. So she dragged through a wretched, miserable year, without his paying her any heed. And then, poor creature, since her heart could neither live nor die without love, she was forced to find something to love. She fell victim to a strange passion, such as often takes possession of women, and especially, it would seem, of the noblest and most inaccessible, when maturity comes and the fair fruit of life has not been gathered. She made the acquaintance of a woman who, from their first meeting, gained an ascendancy over her through her mysterious power of attraction.

This woman was about her own age, and she was a nun. She was always busy with charitable works. A tall, fine, rather stout woman, dark, with rather bold, handsome features, sharp eyes, a big, sensitive, ever-smiling mouth, and a masterful chin. She was remarkably intelligent, and not at all sentimental; she had the malice of a peasant, a keen business sense, and a southern imagination, which saw everything in exaggeration, though always exactly to scale when necessary: she was a strangely enticing mixture of lofty mysticism and lawyer's cunning. She was used to domination, and the exercise of it was a habit with her. Jacqueline was drawn to her at once. She became enthusiastic over her work, or, at least, believed herself to be so. Sister Angèle knew perfectly what was the object of her passion: she was used to provoking them; and without seeming to notice them, she used skilfully to turn them to account for her work

and the glory of God. Jacqueline gave up her money, her will, her heart. She was charitable, so she believed, through love.

It was not long before her infatuation was observed. She was the only person not to realize it. Georges's guardian became anxious. Georges was too generous and too easy to worry about money matters, though he saw his mother's subjection, and was shocked by it. He tried, too late in the day, to resume his old intimacy with her, and saw that a veil was drawn between them; he blamed the occult influence for it, and, both against his mother and the nun, whom he called an intriguer, he conceived a feeling of irritation which he made no attempt to disguise: he could not admit a stranger to his place in a heart that he had regarded as his natural right. It never occurred to him that his place was taken because he had left it. Instead of trying patiently to win it back, he was clumsy and cruel. Quick words passed between mother and son, both of whom were hasty and passionate, and the rupture grew marked. Sister Angèle established her ascendancy over Jacqueline, and Georges rushed away and kicked over the traces. He plunged into a restless, dissipated life; gambled, lost large sums of money; he put a certain amount of exaggeration into his extravagances, partly for his own pleasure and partly to counterbalance his mother's extravagances.—He knew the Stevens-Delestrades. Colette had marked down the handsome boy, and tried the effect on him of her charms, which she never wearied of using. She knew of all Georges's freaks, and was vastly entertained by them. But her sound common sense and the real kindness concealed beneath her frivolity, helped her to see the danger the young idiot was running. And, being well aware that it was beyond her to save him, she warned Christophe, who came at once.

Christophe was the only person who had any influence over young Jeannin. His influence was limited and very intermittent, but all the more remarkable in that it was difficult to explain. Christophe belonged to the preceding generation against which Georges and his companions were violently in reaction. He was one of the most conspicuous representatives

of that period of torment whose art and ideas rouse in them a feeling of suspicion and hostility. He was unmoved by the new Gospels and the charms of the minor prophets and the old cheapjacks who were offering the young men an infallible recipe for the salvation of the world, Rome and France. He was faithful to the free faith, free of all religion, free of all parties, free of all countries, which was no longer the fashion—or had never been fashionable. Finally, though he was altogether removed from national questions, he was a foreigner in Paris at a time when all foreigners were regarded by the natives of the country as barbarians.

And yet, young Jeannin, joyous, easy-going, instinctively hostile to everything that might make him sad or uneasy, ardent in pursuit of pleasure, engrossed in violent sports, easily duped by the rhetoric of his time, in his physical vigor and mental indolence inclined to the brutal doctrines of French action, nationalist, royalist, imperialist—(he did not exactly know)—in his heart reflected only one man: Christophe. His precocious experience and the delicate tact he had inherited from his mother made him see (without being in the least disturbed by it) how little worth was the world that he could not live without, and how superior to it was Christophe. From Olivier he had inherited a vague uneasiness, which visited him in sudden fits that never lasted very long, a need of finding and deciding on some definite aim for what he was doing. And perhaps it was from Olivier that he had also inherited the mysterious instinct which drew him towards the man whom Olivier had loved.

He used to go and see Christophe. He was expansive by nature, and of a rather chattering temper, and he loved indulging in confidences. He never troubled to think whether Christophe had time to listen to him. But Christophe always did listen, and never gave any sign of impatience. Only sometimes he would be rather absent-minded when Georges had interrupted him in his work, but never for more than a few minutes, when his mind would be away putting the finishing touches to its work: then it would return to Georges, who never noticed its absence. He used to laugh at the evasion, and come back like a man tiptoeing into the room, so as not to be heard.

But once or twice Georges did notice it, and then he said indignantly:

"But you are not listening!"

Then Christophe was ashamed: and docilely he would listen to Georges's story, and try to win his forgiveness by redoubled attention. The stories were often very funny: and Christophe could not help laughing at the tale of some wild freak: for Georges kept nothing back: his frankness was disarming.

Christophe did not always laugh. Georges's conduct sometimes pained him. Christophe was no saint: he knew he had no right to moralize over anybody. Georges's love affairs, and the scandalous waste of his fortune in folly, were not what shocked him most. What he found it most hard to forgive was the light-mindedness with which Georges regarded his sins: they were no burden to him: he thought them very natural. His conception of morality was very different from Christophe's. He was one of those young men who are fain to see in the relation of the sexes nothing more than a game that has no moral aspect whatever. A certain frankness and a careless kindliness were all that was necessary for an honest man. He was not troubled with Christophe's scruples. Christophe would wax wrath. In vain did he try not to impose his way of feeling upon others: he could not be tolerant, and his old violence was only half tamed. Every now and then he would explode. He could not help seeing how dirty were some of Georges's intrigues, and he used bluntly to tell him so. Georges was no more patient than he, and they used to have angry scenes, after which they would not see each other for weeks. Christophe would realize that his outbursts were not likely to change Georges's conduct, and that it was perhaps unjust to subject the morality of a period to the moral ideas of another generation. But his feeling was too strong for him, and on the next opportunity he would break out again. How can one renounce the faith for which one has lived? That were to renounce life. What is the good of laboring to think thoughts other than one's own, to be like one's neighbor or to meddle with his affairs? That leads to self-destruction, and no one is benefited by it. The first duty is to be what one is, to dare to say: "This

is good, that bad." One profits the weak more by being strong than by sharing their weakness. Be indulgent, if you like, towards weakness and past sins. But never compromise with any weakness. . . .

Yes: but Georges never by any chance consulted Christophe about anything he was going to do:—(did he know himself?).—He only told him about things when they were done.—And then? . . . Then, what could he do but look in dumb reproach at the culprit, and shrug his shoulders and smile, like an old uncle who knows that he is not heeded?

On such occasions they would sit for several minutes in silence. Georges would look up at Christophe's grave eyes, which seemed to be gazing at him from far away. And he would feel like a little boy in his presence. He would see himself as he was, in that penetrating glance, which was shot with a gleam of malice: and he was not proud of it.

Christophe hardly ever made use of Georges's confidences against him; it was often as though he had not heard them. After the mute dialogue of their eyes, he would shake his head mockingly, and then begin to tell a story without any apparent bearing on the story he had just been told, some story about his life, or some one else's life, real or fictitious. And gradually Georges would see his double (he recognized it at once) under a new light, grotesquely, ridiculously postured, passing through vagaries similar to his own. Christophe never added any commentary. The extraordinary kindliness of the story-teller would produce far more effect than the story. He would speak of himself just as he spoke of others, with the same detachment, the same jovial, serene humor. Georges was impressed by his tranquillity. It was for this that he came. When he had unburdened himself of his light-hearted confession, he was like a man stretching out his limbs and lying at full length in the shade of a great tree on a summer afternoon. The dazzling fever of the scorching day would fall away from him. Above him he would feel the hovering of protecting wings. In the presence of this man who so peacefully bore the heavy burden of his life, he was sheltered from his own inward restlessness. He found rest only in hearing him speak. He did not always

listen: his mind would wander, but wheresoever it went, it was surrounded by Christophe's laughter.

However, he did not understand his old friend's ideas. He used to wonder how Christophe could bear his soul's solitude, and dispense with being bound to any artistic, political, or religious party, or any group of men. He used to ask him: "Don't you ever want to take refuge in a camp of some sort?"

"Take refuge?" Christophe would say with a laugh. "It is much too good outside. And you, an open-air man, talk of shutting yourself up?"

"Ah!" Georges would reply. "It is not the same thing for body and soul. The mind needs certainty: it needs to think with others, to adhere to the principles admitted by all the men of the time. I envy the men of old days, the men of the classic ages. My friends are right in their desire to restore the order of the past."

"Milksop!" said Christophe. "What have I to do with such disheartened creatures?"

"I am not disheartened," protested Georges indignantly. "None of us is that."

"But you must be," said Christophe, "to be afraid of yourselves. What! You need order and cannot create it for yourselves? You must always be clinging to your great-grandmother's skirts! Dear God! You must walk alone!"

"One must take root," said Georges, proudly echoing one of the pontiffs of the time.

"But do you think the trees need to be shut up in a box to take root? The earth is there for all of us. Plunge your roots into it. Find your own laws. Look to yourself."

"I have no time," said Georges.

"You are afraid," insisted Christophe.

Georges indignantly denied it, but in the end he agreed that he had no taste for examining his inmost soul: he could not understand what pleasure there could be in it: there was the danger of falling over if you looked down into the abyss.

"Give me your hand," said Christophe.

He would amuse himself by opening the trap-door of his

realistic, tragic vision of life. Georges would draw away from it, and Christophe would shut it down again, laughing:

"How can you live like that?" Georges would ask.

"I am alive, and I am happy," Christophe would reply.

"I should die if I were forced to see things like that always."

Christophe would slap him on the shoulder:

"Fine athlete you are! . . . Well, don't look, if your head is not strong enough. There is nothing to make you, after all. Go ahead, my boy. But do you need a master to brand your shoulder, like a sheep? What is the word of command you are waiting for? The signal was given long ago. The signal to saddle has sounded, and the cavalry is on the march. Don't worry about anything but your horse. Take your place! And gallop!"

"But where to?" asked Georges.

"With your regiment to the conquest of the world. Conquer the air, master the elements, dig the last entrenchment of Nature, set back space, drive back death . . .

"*Expertus vacuum Dædalus aera. . . .*"

". . . Do you know that, you champion of Latin? Can you even tell me what it means?

"*Perrupit Acheronta. . . .*"

"That is your lot, you happy *conquistadores!*"

So clearly did he show the duty of heroic action that had devolved upon the new generation, that Georges was amazed, and said:

"But if you feel that, why don't you come with us?"

"Because I have a different task. Go, my boy, do your work. Surpass me, if you can. But I stay here and watch. . . . Have you read the Arabian Night in which a genii, as tall as a mountain, is imprisoned in a bottle sealed with the seal of Solomon? . . . The genii is here, in the depths of our soul, the soul into which you are afraid to look down. I and the men of my time spent our lives in struggling with him: we did not conquer him: he conquered us. At present we are both recovering our breath, and, with no rancor nor fear, we are looking at each other, satisfied with the struggles in which we have been engaged, waiting for the agreed armistice to expire. You are profiting by the armistice to gather your strength and

cull the world's beauty. Be happy. Enjoy the lull. But remember that one day, you or your children, on your return from your conquests, will have to come back to the place where I stand and resume the combat, with new forces, against the genii by whose side I watch and wait. And the combat will endure with intervals of armistice until one of the two (perhaps both) will be laid low. It is your duty to be stronger and happier than we! . . .—Meanwhile, indulge in your sport if you like: stiffen your muscles and strengthen your heart: and do not be so foolish as to waste your impatient vigor upon silly trifles: you belong to an age that, if you are patient, will find a use for it."

Georges did not remember much of what Christophe said to him. He was open-minded enough to grasp Christophe's ideas, but they escaped him at once. He forgot everything before he reached the bottom of the stairs. But all the same, he had a feeling of well-being, which endured when the memory of the words that had produced it had long been wiped out. He had a real veneration for Christophe. He believed in nothing that Christophe believed in (at heart he laughed at everything and had no belief). But he would have broken the head of any man who took upon himself to speak ill of his old friend. Fortunately, no one did speak ill of him in his presence, otherwise he would have been kept busy.

Christophe had accurately forecast the next change of the wind. The new ideal of the new French music was very different from his own; but while that was a reason the more for Christophe to sympathize with it, its exponents had no sympathy with him. His vogue with the public was not likely to reconcile the most hungry for recognition of these young men to him; they were meagerly fed, and their teeth were long, and they bit. Christophe was not put out by their spite.

"How thoroughly they do it!" he would say. "These boys are cutting their teeth. . . ."

He was inclined to prefer them to the other puppies who fawned on him because of his success—those people of whom D'Aubigné writes, who "*when a mastiff plunges his nose into*

a butter-pot, come and lick his whiskers by way of congratulation."

He had a piece accepted at the Opéra. Almost at once it was put into rehearsal. Through a newspaper attack Christophe learned that a certain young composer's piece had been postponed for it. The writer of the article waxed indignant over such abuse of power, and made Christophe responsible for it.

Christophe went to see the manager, and said:

"Why didn't you tell me? You must not do it. You must put on the opera you accepted before mine."

The manager protested, began to laugh, refused, covered Christophe's character, work, genius, with flattery, and said that the other man's work was beneath contempt, and assured him that it was worthless and would not make a sou.

"Why did you accept it then?"

"One can't always do as one likes. Every now and then one has to throw a sop to public opinion. Formerly these young men could shout as much as they pleased. And no one listened to them. But now they are able to let loose on us the nationalist Press, which roars 'Treason' and calls you a disloyal Frenchman because you happen to have the misfortune to be unable to go into ecstasies over the younger school. The younger school! Let's look at it! . . . Shall I tell you what I think of it? I'm sick of it! So is the public. They bore us with their *Oremus!* . . . There's no blood in their veins: they're like sacristans chanting Mass: their love duets are like the *De Profundis.* . . . If I were fool enough to put on the pieces I am compelled to accept, I should ruin my theater. I accept them: that is all they can ask.—Let us talk of something serious. Your work means a full house. . . ."

And he went on with his compliments.

Christophe cut him short, and said angrily:

"I am not taken in. Now that I am old and have 'arrived,' you are using me to suppress the young men. When I was a young man you would have suppressed me in just the same way. You must play this boy's piece, or I shall withdraw my own."

The manager threw up his hands, and said:

"But don't you see that if we did what you want, it would look as if we were giving in to these newspaper attacks?"

"What do I care?" said Christophe.

"As you please! You will be their first victim."

They put the young musician's piece into rehearsal without interrupting the preparation of Christophe's. One was in three acts, the other in two: it was arranged to include them both in one program. Christophe went to see the young man, for he wanted to be the first to give him the news. The musician was loud in his promises of eternal gratitude.

Naturally Christophe could not make the manager not devote all his attention to his piece. The interpretation and the scenery of the other were rather scamped. Christophe knew nothing about it. He asked to be allowed to be present at a few rehearsals of the young man's opera: he thought it very mediocre, as he had been told: he ventured to give a little advice which was ill-received: he gave it up then, and did not interfere again. On the other hand, the manager had made the young man admit the necessity for a little cutting to have his piece produced in time. Though the sacrifice was easily consented to at first, it was not long before the author regretted it.

On the evening of the performance the beginner's piece had no success, and Christophe's caused a sensation. Some of the papers attacked Christophe: they spoke of a trick, a plot to suppress a great young French artist: they said that his work had been mutilated to please the German master, whom they represented to be basely jealous of the coming fame of all the new men. Christophe shrugged his shoulders and thought:

"He will reply."

"He" did not reply. Christophe sent him one of the paragraphs with these words:

"Have you read this?"

The other replied:

"How sorry I am! The writer of it has always been so well disposed towards me! Really, I am very sorry. The best thing is to pay no attention to it."

Christophe laughed and thought:

"He is right! The little sneak."

And he decided to forget all about it.

But chance would have it that Georges, who seldom read the papers, and that hastily, except for the sporting articles, should light on the most violent attacks on Christophe. He knew the writer. He went to the café where he knew he would meet him, found him, struck him, fought a duel with him, and gave him a nasty scratch on the shoulder with his rapier.

Next day, at breakfast, Christophe had a letter from a friend telling him of the affair. He was overcome. He left his breakfast and hurried to see Georges. Georges himself opened the door. Christophe rushed in like a whirlwind, seized him by the arms, and shook him angrily, and began to overwhelm him with a storm of furious reproaches.

"You little wretch!" he cried. "You have fought a duel for me! Who gave you leave! A boy, a fly-by-night, to meddle in my affairs! Do you think I can't look after myself? What good have you done? You have done this rascal the honor of fighting him. He asked no more. You have made him a hero. Idiot! And if it had chanced . . . (I am sure you rushed at it like a madman as usual) . . . if you had been wounded, killed perhaps! . . . You wretch! I should never have forgiven you as long as you lived! . . ."

Georges laughed uproariously at this last threat, and was so overcome with merriment, that he cried:

"My dear old friend, how funny you are! Ah! You're unique! Here are you insulting me for having defended you! Next time I shall attack you. Perhaps you'll embrace me then."

Christophe stopped and hugged Georges, and kissed him on both cheeks, and then once more he said:

"My boy! . . . Forgive me. I am an old idiot. . . . But my blood boiled when I heard the news. What made you think of fighting? You don't fight with such people. Promise me at once that you will never do it again."

"I'll promise nothing of the kind," said Georges. "I shall do as I like."

"I forbid it. Do you hear? If you do it again, I'll never see you again. I shall publicly disown you in the newspapers I shall . . ."

"You will disinherit me, you mean."

"Come, Georges. Please. What's the good of it?"

"My dear old friend, you are a thousand times a better man than I am, and you know infinitely more: but I know these people better than you do. Make yourself easy. It will do some good. They will think a little now before they let loose their poisonous insults upon you."

"But what can these idiots do to me? I laugh at anything they may say."

"But I don't. And you must mind your own business."

Thereafter Christophe lived on tenterhooks lest some fresh article might rouse Georges's susceptibilities. It was quite comic to see him during the next few days going to a café and devouring the newspapers, which he never read as a rule, ready to go to all lengths (even to trickery) if he found an insulting article, to prevent it reaching Georges. After a week he recovered his equanimity. The boy was right. His action had given the yelping curs food for a moment's reflection.—And, though Christophe went on grumbling at the young lunatic who had made him waste eight working days, he said to himself that, after all, he had no right to lecture him. He remembered a certain day, not so very long ago, when he himself had fought a duel for Olivier's sake. And he thought he heard Olivier's voice saying:

"Let be, Christophe. I am giving you back what you lent me!"

Though Christophe took the attacks on himself lightly, there was one other man who was very far from such disinterestedness. This was Emmanuel.

The evolution of European thought was progressing swiftly. It was as though it had been accelerated by mechanical inventions and the new motors. The stock of prejudices and hopes which in old days were enough to feed humanity for twenty years was now exhausted in five years. The generations of the mind were galloping ahead, one behind the other, often one trampling the other down, with Time sounding the charge.—Emmanuel had been left behind.

The singer of French energy had never denied the idealism of his master, Olivier. Passionate as was his national feeling,

he identified himself with his worship of moral greatness. If in his poetry he loudly proclaimed the triumph of France, it was because in her, by an act of faith, he adored the loftiest ideas of modern Europe, the Athena Nike, the victorious Law which takes its revenge on Force.—And now Force had awakened in the very heart of Law, and it was springing up in all its savage nakedness. The new generation, robust and disciplined, was longing for combat, and, before its victory was won, had the attitude of mind of the conqueror. This generation was proud of its strength, its thews, its mighty chest, its vigorous senses so thirsting for delight, its wings like the wings of a bird of prey hovering over the plains, waiting to swoop down and try its talons. The prowess of the race, the mad flights over the Alps and the sea, the new crusades, not much less mystic, not much less interested than those of Philip Augustus and Villehardouin, had turned the nation's head. The children of the nation who had never seen war except in books had no difficulty in endowing it with beauty. They became aggressive. Weary of peace and ideas, they hymned the anvil of battle, on which, with bloody fists, action would one day new-forge the power of France. In reaction against the disgusting abuse of systems of ideas, they raised contempt of the idea to the level of a profession of faith. Blusteringly they exalted narrow common sense, violent realism, immodest national egoism, trampling underfoot the rights of others and other nations, when it served the turn of their country's greatness. They were xenophobes, anti-democrats, and—even the most skeptical of them—set up the return to Catholicism, in the practical necessity for "digging channels for the absolute," and shutting up the infinite under the surveillance of order and authority. They were not content to despise—they regarded the gentle dotards of the preceding generation, the visionary idealists, the humanitarian thinkers of the preceding generation, as public malefactors. Emmanuel was among them in the eyes of the young men. He suffered cruelly and was very angry.

The knowledge that Christophe was, like himself,—more than himself—the victim of their injustice, made him sympathetic. His ungraciousness had discouraged Christophe's visits. He was too proud to show his regret by seeking him out. But he

contrived to meet him, as if by chance, and forced Christophe to make the first advances. Thereafter his umbrageous susceptibilities were at rest, and he did not conceal the pleasure he had in Christophe's company. Thereafter they often met in each other's rooms.

Emmanuel confided his bitterness to Christophe. He was exasperated by certain criticisms, and, thinking that Christophe was not sufficiently moved by them, he made him read some of the newspaper appreciations of himself. Christophe was accused of not knowing the grammar of his work, of being ignorant of harmony, of having stolen from other musicians, and, generally, of dishonoring music. He was called: "This old toss-brain. . . ." They said: "We have had enough of these convulsionaries. We are order, reason, classic balance. . . ."

Christophe was vastly entertained.

"It is the law," he said. "The young bury the old. . . . In my day, it is true, we waited until a man was sixty before we called him an old man. They are going faster, nowadays. . . . Wireless telegraphy, aeroplanes. . . . A generation is more quickly exploded. . . . Poor devils! They won't last long! Let them despise us and strut about in the sun!"

But Emmanuel had not his sanity. Though he was fearless in thought, he was a prey to his diseased nerves; with his ardent soul in his rickety body, he was driven on to the fight and was unfitted for it. The animosity of certain opinions of his work drew blood.

"Ah!" he would say. "If the critics knew the harm they do artists by the unjust words they throw out so recklessly, they would be ashamed of their trade."

"But they do know, my friend. That is the justification of their existence. Everybody must live."

"They are butchers. One is drenched with the blood of life, worn out by the struggle we have to wage with art. Instead of holding out their hands to us, and compassionately telling us of our faults, and brotherly helping us to mend them, they stand there with their hands in their pockets and watch you dragging your burden up the slope, and say: 'You can't do

it!' And when you reach the top, some of them say: 'Yes, but that is not the way to climb up.' While the others go on blandly saying: 'You couldn't do it! . . .' You're lucky if they don't send great stones rolling down on you to send you flying!"

"Bah! There are plenty of good men among them, and think of the good they can do! There are bad men everywhere. They're not peculiar to criticism. Do you know anything worse than an ungenerous, vain, and embittered artist, to whom the world is only loot, that he is furious because he cannot grab? You must don patience for your protection. There is no evil but it may be of good service. The worst of the critics is useful to us; he is a trainer: he does not let us loiter by the way. Whenever we think we have reached the goal, the pack hound us on. Get on! Onward! Upward! They are more likely to weary of running after me than I am of marching ahead of them. Remember the Arabian proverb: '*It is no use flogging sterile trees. Only those are stoned whose front is crowned with golden fruit.* . . .' Let us pity the artists who are spared. They will stay half-way, lazily sitting down. When they try to get up their legs will be so stiff that they will be unable to walk. Long live my friend the enemy! They do me more good in my life than the enemy, my friend!"

Emmanuel could not help smiling. Then he said:

"All the same, don't you think it hard for a veteran like you to be taken to task by recruits who are just approaching their first battle?"

"They amuse me," said Christophe. "Such arrogance is the mark of young, hot blood tingling to be up and doing. I was like that once. They are like the showers of March falling on the new-born soil. . . . Let them take us to task! They are right, after all. Old people must learn from the young! They have profited by us, and are ungrateful: that is in the order of things. But, being enriched by our efforts, they will go farther than we, and will realize what we attempted. If we still have some youth left, let us learn in our turn, and try to rejuvenate ourselves. If we cannot, if we are too old, let us rejoice in them. It is fine to see the perpetual new-flowering of the human soul that seemed exhausted, the vigorous

optimism of these young men, their delight in action and adventures, the races springing to new life for the conquest of the world."

"What would they be without us? Their joy is the fruit of our tears. Their proud force is the flower of the sufferings of a whole generation. *Sic vos non nobis. . . .*"

"The old saying is wrong. It is for ourselves that we worked, and our reward lies in the creation of a race of men who shall surpass us. We amassed their treasury, we hoarded it in a wretched hovel open to all the winds of Heaven: we had to strain every nerve to keep the doors closed against death. Our arms carved out the triumphal way along which our sons shall march. Our sufferings have saved the future. We have borne the Ark to the threshold of the Promised Land. It will reach that Land with them, and through us."

"Will they ever remember those who crossed the wilderness, bearing the sacred fire, the gods of our race, and them, those children, who now are men? For our share we have had tribulation and ingratitude."

"Do you regret it?"

"No. There is a sort of intoxication in the tragic grandeur of the sacrifice of a mighty epoch like ours to the epoch that it has brought into being. The men of to-day would not be more capable of tasting the sovereign joy of renunciation."

"We have been the happier. We have scaled Mount Nebo, at whose feet lie stretched the countries that we shall never enter. But we enjoy them more than those who will enter them. When you descend to the plain, you lose sight of the plain's immensity and the far horizon."

The soothing influence that Christophe exercised over Georges and Emmanuel had the source of its power in Grazia's love. It was through this love that he felt himself so near to all young things, and had an inexhaustible fund of sympathy for every new form of life. Whatever the forces might be that rekindled the earth, he was always with them, even when they were against him: he had no fear for the immediate future of the democracies, that future which caused such an outcry against

the egoism of a handful of privileged men: he did not cling desperately to the paternosters of an old art: he felt quite sure that from the fabulous visions, the realized dreams of science and action, a new art, more puissant than the old, would spring forth: he hailed the new dawn of the world, even though the beauty of the old world were to die with it.

Grazia knew the good that her love did for Christophe: and this consciousness of her power lifted her out of herself. Through her letters she exercised a controlling power over her friend. She was not so absurdly pretentious as to try to control his art: she had too much tact, and knew her limitations. But her true, pure voice was the diapason to which he attuned his soul. Christophe had only to hear her voice echoing his thought to think nothing that was not just, pure, and worthy of repetition. The sound of a beautiful instrument is to a musician like a beautiful body in which his dream at once becomes incarnate. Mysterious is the fusion of two loving spirits: each takes the best from the other, but only to give it back again enriched with love. Grazia was not afraid to tell Christophe that she loved him. Distance gave her more freedom of speech, and also, the certain knowledge that she would never be his. Her love, the religious fervor of which was communicated to Christophe, was a fountain of force and peace to him.

Grazia gave to others more of such force and peace than she had herself. Her health was shattered, her moral balance seriously affected. Her son's condition did not improve. For the last two years she had lived in a perpetual state of anxiety, aggravated by Lionello's fatal skill in playing on it. He had acquired a consummate mastery of the art of keeping those who loved him on tenterhooks: his idle mind was most fertile in inventing ways of rousing interest in himself and tormenting others: it had become a mania with him. And the tragedy of it was, that, while he aped the ravages of disease, the disease did make real inroads upon him, and death peeped forth. Then the expected happened: Grazia, having been tortured by her son for years with his imaginary illness, ceased to believe in it when the illness really came. The heart has its limitations. She had exhausted her store of pity over his lies. She thought Lionello was still a comedian when he spoke the truth. And

when the truth was revealed to her, the rest of her life was poisoned by remorse.

Lionello's malice had not laid aside its weapons. Having no love for any one in the world, he could not bear any of those near him to feel love for any one else: jealousy was his only passion. It was not enough for him to have separated his mother and Christophe: he tried to force her to break off the intimacy which subsisted between them. Already he had employed his usual weapon—his illness—to make Grazia swear that she would not marry again. He was not satisfied with her promise. He tried to force his mother to give up writing to Christophe. On this she rebelled; and, being delivered by such an attempted abuse of power, she spoke harshly and severely to Lionello about his habit of lying, and, later on, regarded herself as a criminal for having done so: for her words flung Lionello into a fit of fury which made him really ill. His illness grew worse as he saw that his mother did not believe in it. Then, in his fury, he longed to die so as to avenge himself. He never thought that his wish would be granted.

When the doctor told Grazia that there was no hope for her son, she was dumfounded. But she had to disguise her despair in order to deceive the boy who had so often deceived her. He had a suspicion that this time it was serious, but he refused to believe it; and his eyes watched his mother's eyes for the reproachful expression that had infuriated him when he was lying. There came a time when there was no room for doubt. Then it was terrible, both for him and his mother and sister: he did not wish to die. . . .

When at last Grazia saw him sinking to sleep, she gave no cry and made no moan: she astonished those about her by her silence: she had no strength left for suffering: she had only one desire, to sleep also. However, she went about the business of her life with the same apparent calm. After a few weeks her smile returned to her lips, but she was more silent still. No one suspected her inward distress, Christophe least of all. She had only written to tell him the news, without a word of herself. She did not answer Christophe's anxiously affectionate letters. He wanted to come to her: she begged him not to. At the end of two or three months, she resumed her old grave, serene

tone with him. She would have thought it criminal to put upon him the burden of her weakness. She knew how the echo of all her feelings reverberated in him, and how great was his need to lean on her. She did not impose upon herself the restraint of sorrow. This discipline was her salvation. In her weariness of life only two things gave her life: Christophe's love, and the fatalism, which, in sorrow as in joy, lay at the heart of her Italian nature. There was nothing intellectual in her fatalism: it was the animal instinct, which makes a hunted beast go on, with no consciousness of fatigue, in a staring wide-eyed dream, forgetting the stones of the road, forgetting its own body, until it falls. Her fatalism sustained her body. Love sustained her heart. Now that her own life was worn out, she lived in Christophe. And yet she was more scrupulous than ever never in her letters to tell him of the love she had for him: no doubt because her love was greater: but also because she was conscious of the *veto* of the dead boy, who had made her affection a crime. Then she would relapse into silence, and refrain from writing for a time.

Christophe did not understand her silence. Sometimes in the composed and tranquil tone of one of her letters he would be conscious of an unexpected note that seemed to be quivering with passionate moaning. That would prostrate him: but he dared not say anything: he hardly dared to notice it: he was like a man holding his breath, afraid to breathe, for fear of destroying an illusion. He knew almost infallibly that in the next letter such notes as these would be atoned for by a deliberate coldness. Then, once more, tranquillity . . . *Meeresstille*. . . .

Georges and Emmanuel met at Christophe's one afternoon. Both were preoccupied with their own troubles: Emmanuel with his literary disappointments, and Georges with some athletic failure. Christophe listened to them good-humoredly and teased them affectionately. There was a ring at the door. Georges went to open it. A servant had come with a letter from Colette. Christophe stood by the window to read it. His friends went on with their discussion, and did not see Christophe, whose back was turned to them. He left the room without their noticing it. And when they realized that he had done so, they were not

surprised. But as time passed and he did not return, Georges went and knocked at the door of the next room. There was no reply. Georges did not persist, for he knew his old friend's queer ways. A few minutes later Christophe returned without a word. He seemed very calm, very kind, very gentle. He begged their pardon for leaving them, took up the conversation where he had left it, and spoke kindly about their troubles, and said many helpful things. The tone of his voice moved them, though they knew not why.

They left him. Georges went straight to Colette's, and found her in tears. As soon as she saw him she came swiftly to him and asked:

"How did our poor friend take the blow? It is terrible."

Georges did not understand. And Colette told him that she had just sent Christophe the news of Grazia's death.

She was gone, without having had time to say farewell to anybody. For several months past the roots of her life had been almost torn out of the earth: a puff of wind was enough to lay it low. On the evening before the relapse of influenza which carried her off she received a long, kind letter from Christophe. It had filled her with tenderness, and she longed to bid him come to her: she felt that everything else, everything that kept them apart, was absurd and culpable. She was very weary, and put off writing to him until the next day. On the day after she had to stay in bed. She began a letter which she did not finish: she had an attack of giddiness, and her head swam: besides, she was reluctant to speak of her illness, and was afraid of troubling Christophe. He was busy at the time with rehearsals of a choral symphony set to a poem of Emmanuel's: the subject had roused them both to enthusiasm, for it was something symbolical of their own destiny: *The Promised Land.* Christophe had often mentioned it to Grazia. The first performance was to take place the following week. . . . She must not upset him. In her letter Grazia just spoke of a slight cold. Then that seemed too much to her. She tore up the letter, and had no strength left to begin another. She told herself that she would write in the evening. When the evening came it was too late—too late to bid him come, too late even

to write. . . . How swiftly everything passes! A few hours are enough to destroy the labor of ages. . . . Grazia hardly had time to give her daughter a ring she wore and beg her to send it to her friend. Till then she had not been very intimate with Aurora. Now that her life was ebbing away, she gazed passionately at the face of the girl: she clung to the hand that would pass on the pressure of her own, and, joyfully, she thought:

"Not all of me will pass away."

"Quid? hic, inquam, quis est qui complet aures meas tantus et tam dulcis sonus? . . ."—(The Dream of Scipio.)

When he left Colette, on an impulse of sympathy Georges went back to Christophe's. For a long time, through Colette's indiscretions, he had known the place that Grazia filled in his old friend's heart: he had even—(for youth is not respectful)—made fun of it. But now generously and keenly he felt the sorrow that Christophe must be feeling at such a loss: and he felt that he must go to him, embrace him, pity him. Knowing the violence of his passions,—the tranquillity that Christophe had shown made him anxious. He rang the bell. No answer. He rang once more and knocked, giving the signal agreed between Christophe and himself. He heard the moving of a chair and a slow, heavy tread. Christophe opened the door. His face was so calm that Georges stopped still, just as he was about to fling himself into his arms: he knew not what to say. Christophe asked him gently:

"You, my boy. Have you forgotten something?"

Georges muttered uneasily:

"Yes."

"Come in."

Christophe went and sat in the chair he had left on Georges's arrival, near the window, with his head thrown back, looking at the roofs opposite and the reddening evening sky. He paid no attention to Georges. The young man pretended to look about on the table, while he stole glances at Christophe. His face was set: the beams of the setting sun lit up his cheek-bones and his forehead. Mechanically Georges went into the next

room—the bedroom—as though he were still looking for something. It was in this room that Christophe had shut himself up with the letter. It was still there on the bed, which bore the imprint of a body. On the floor lay a book that had slipped down. It had been left open with a page crumpled. Georges picked it up, and read the story of the meeting of the Magdalene and the Gardener in the Gospel.

He came back into the living-room, and moved a few things here and there to gain countenance, and once more he looked at Christophe, who had not budged. He longed to tell him how he pitied him. But Christophe was so radiant with light that Georges felt that it was out of place to speak. It was rather himself who stood in need of consolation. He said timidly:

"I am going."

Without turning his head, Christophe said:

"Good-by, my boy."

Georges went away and closed the door without a sound.

For a long time Christophe sat there. Night came. He was not suffering: he was not thinking: he saw no definite image. He was like a tired man listening to some vague music without making any attempt to understand it. The night was far gone when he got up, cramped and stiff. He flung himself on his bed and slept heavily. The symphony went on buzzing all around him. . . .

And now he saw *her,* the well-beloved. . . . She held out her hands to him, and said, smiling:

"Now you have passed through the zone of fire."

Then his heart melted. An indescribable peace filled the starry spaces, where the music of the spheres flung out its great, still, profound sheets of water. . . .

When he awoke (it was day), his strange happiness still endured, with the distant gleam of words falling upon his ears. He got up. He was exalted with a silent, holy enthusiasm.

> " . . *Or vedi, figlio,*
> *tra Beatrice e te è questo muro . . .*"

Between Beatrice and himself, the wall was broken down.

For a long time now more than half his soul had dwelt upon the other side. The more a man lives, the more a man creates, the more a man loves and loses those whom he loves, the more does he escape from death. With every new blow that we have to bear, with every new work that we round and finish, we escape from ourselves, we escape into the work we have created, the soul we have loved, the soul that has left us. When all is told, Rome is not in Rome: the best of a man lies outside himself. Only Grazia had withheld him on this side of the wall. And now in her turn . . . Now the door was shut upon the world of sorrow.

He lived through a period of secret exaltation. He felt the weight of no fetters. He expected nothing of the things of this world. He was dependent upon nothing. He was set free. The struggle was at an end. Issuing from the zone of combat and the circle where reigned the God of heroic conflict, *Dominus Deus Sabaoth,* he looked down, and in the night saw the torch of the Burning Bush put out. How far away it was! When it had lit up his path he had thought himself almost at the summit. And since then, how far he had had to go! And yet the topmost pinnacle seemed no nearer. He would never reach it (he saw that now), though he were to march on to eternity. But when a man enters the circle of light and knows that he has not left those he loves behind him, eternity is not too long a space to be journeying on with them.

He closed his doors. No one knocked. Georges had expended all his compassion and sympathy in the one impulse; he was reassured by the time he reached home, and forgot all about it by the next day. Colette had gone to Rome. Emmanuel knew nothing, and hypersensitive as usual, he maintained an affronted silence because Christophe had not returned his visit. Christophe was not disturbed in his long colloquy with the woman whom he now bore in his soul, as a pregnant woman bears her precious burden. It was a moving intercourse, impossible to translate into words. Even music could hardly express it. When his heart was full, almost overflowing, Christophe would lie still with eyes closed, and listen to its song. Or, for hours together, he would sit at his piano and let his fingers speak. During this period he improvised more than he had done in

the whole of his life. He did not set down his thoughts. What was the good?

When, after several weeks, he took to going out again and seeing other men, while none of his friends, except Georges, had any suspicion of what had happened, the daimon of improvisation pursued him still. It would take possession of Christophe just when he was least expecting it. One evening, at Colette's, Christophe sat down at the piano and played for nearly an hour, absolutely surrendering himself, and forgetting that the room was full of strangers. They had no desire to laugh. His terrible improvisations enslaved and overwhelmed them. Even those who did not understand their meaning were thrilled and moved: and tears came to Colette's eyes. . . . When Christophe had finished he turned away abruptly: he saw how everybody was moved, and shrugged his shoulders, and—laughed.

He had reached the point at which sorrow also becomes a force—a dominant force. His sorrow possessed him no more: he possessed his sorrow: in vain it fluttered and beat upon its bars: he kept it caged.

From that period date his most poignant and his happiest works: a scene from the Gospel which Georges recognized—

"Mulier, quid ploras?"—"Quia tulerunt Dominum meum, et nescio ubi posuerunt eum."
Et cum hæc dixisset, conversa est retrorsum, et vidit Jesum stantem: et non sciebat quia Jesus est.

—a series of tragic *lieder* set to verses of popular Spanish *cantares,* among others a gloomy sad love-song, like a black flame—

"Quisiera ser el sepulcro
Donde á ti te han de enterrar,
Para tenerte en mis brazos
Por toda la eternidad."

("Would I were the grave, where thou art to be buried, that I might hold thee in my arms through all eternity.")

—and two symphonies, called *The Island of Tranquillity* and *The Dream of Scipio,* in which, more intimately than in any other of the works of Jean-Christophe Krafft, is realized the

union of the most beautiful of the forces of the music of his time: the affectionate and wise thought of Germany with all its shadowy windings, the clear passionate melody of Italy, and the quick mind of France, rich in subtle rhythms and variegated harmonies.

This "enthusiasm begotten of despair at the time of a great loss" lasted for a few months. Thereafter Christophe fell back into his place in life with a stout heart and a sure foot. The wind of death had blown away the last mists of pessimism, the gray of the Stoic soul, and the phantasmagoria of the mystic chiaroscura. The rainbow had shone upon the vanishing clouds. The gaze of heaven, purer, as though it had been laved with tears, smiled through them. There was the peace of evening on the mountains.

IV

The fire smoldering in the forest of Europe was beginning to burst into flames. In vain did they try to put it out in one place: it only broke out in another: with gusts of smoke and a shower of sparks it swept from one point to another, burning the dry brushwood. Already in the East there were skirmishes as the prelude to the great war of the nations. All Europe, Europe that only yesterday was skeptical and apathetic, like a dead wood, was swept by the flames. All men were possessed by the desire for battle. War was ever on the point of breaking out. It was stamped out, but it sprang to life again. The world felt that it was the mercy of an accident that might let loose the dogs of war. The world lay in wait. The feeling of inevitability weighed heavily even upon the most pacifically minded. And ideologues, sheltered beneath the massive shadow of the cyclops, Proudhon, hymned in war man's fairest title of nobility. . . .

This, then, was to be the end of the physical and moral resurrection of the races of the West! To such butchery they were to be borne along by the currents of action and passionate faith! Only a Napoleonic genius could have marked out a chosen, deliberate aim for this blind, onward rush. But nowhere in Europe was there any genius for action. It was as though the world

had chosen the most mediocre to be its governors. The force of the human mind was in other things.—So there was nothing to be done but to trust to the declivity down which they were moving. This both governors and governed were doing. Europe looked like a vast armed vigil.

Christophe remembered a similar vigil, when he had had Olivier's anxious face by his side. But then the menace of war had been only a passing cloud. Now all Europe lay under its shadow. And Christophe's heart also had changed. He could not share in the hatred of the nations. His state of mind was like that of Goethe in 1813. How could a man fight without hatred? And how could he hate without youth? He had passed through the zone of hatred. Which of the great rival nations was the dearest to him? He had learned to know all their merits, and what the world owed to them. When a man has reached a certain stage in the development of the soul *"he knows no nation, he feels the happiness or unhappiness of the neighboring peoples as his own."* The storm-clouds are at his feet. Around him is nothing but the sky—*"the whole Heavens, the kingdom of the eagle."*

And yet Christophe was sometimes embarrassed by this ambient hostility. In Paris he was made to feel too clearly that he was of the hostile race: even his friend Georges could not resist the pleasure of giving vent, in his presence, to feelings about Germany which made him sad. Then he rushed away, on the excuse that he wanted to see Grazia's daughter: and he went and stayed for a time in Rome. But there the atmosphere was no more serene. The great plague of national pride had spread there, and had transformed the Italian character. The Italians, whom Christophe had known to be indifferent and indolent, were now thinking of nothing but military glory, battle, conquests, Roman eagles flying over the sands of Libya: they believed they had returned to the time of the Emperors. The wonderful thing was that this madness was shared, with the best faith in the world, by the opposition parties, socialists and clericals, as well as by the monarchists, and they had not the least idea that they were being unfaithful to their cause. So little do politics and human reason count when the great epidemic passions sweep over the nations. Such passions do not

even trouble to suppress individual passions; they use them; and everything converges on the one goal. In the great periods of action it was ever thus. The armies of Henri IV., the Councils of Louis XIV., which forged the greatness of France, numbered as many men of faith and reason as men of vanity, interest, and enjoyment. Jansenists and libertines, Puritans and gallants, served the same destiny in serving their instincts. In the forthcoming wars no doubt internationalists and pacificists will kindle the blaze, in the conviction, like that of their ancestors of the Convention, that they are doing it for the good of the nations and the triumph of peace.

With a somewhat ironical smile, Christophe, from the terrace of the Janiculum, looked down on the disparate and harmonious city, the symbol of the universe which it dominated; crumbling ruins, "baroque" façades, modern buildings, cypress and roses intertwined—every age, every style, merged into a powerful and coherent unity beneath the clear light. So the mind should shed over the struggling universe the order and light that are in it.

Christophe did not stay long in Rome. The impression made on him by the city was too strong: he was afraid of it. Truly to profit by its harmony he needed to hear it at a distance: he felt that if he stayed he would be in danger of being absorbed by it, like so many other men of his race.—Every now and then he went and stayed in Germany. But, when all was told, and in spite of the imminence of a Franco-German war, Paris still had the greatest attraction for him. No doubt this was because his adopted son, Georges, lived there. But he was not only swayed by reasons of affection. There were other reasons of an intellectual order that were no less powerful. For an artist accustomed to the full life of the mind, who generously shares in all the sufferings, all the hopes, and all the passions of the great human family, it was difficult to grow accustomed to life in Germany. There was no lack of artists there. But the artists lacked air. They were isolated from the rest of the nation, which took no interest in them: other preoccupations, social or practical, absorbed the attention of the public. The poets shut themselves up in disdainful irritation in their disdained art: it became a point of honor with them to sever

the last ties which bound them to the life of the people: they wrote only for a few, a little aristocracy full of talent, refined and sterile, being itself divided into rival groups of jaded initiates, and they were stifled in the narrow room in which they were huddled together: they were incapable of expanding it, and set themselves to dig down; they turned the soil over until it was exhausted. Then they drifted away into their archaic dreams, and never even troubled to bring their dreams into the common stock. Each man fought for his place in the mist. They had no light in common. Each man had to look for light within himself.

Yonder, on the other hand, on the other side of the Rhine, among their neighbors on the West, the great winds of collective passion, of public turbulence and tribulation, swept periodically over art. And, high above the plain, like their Eiffel Tower above Paris, shone afar off the never-dying light of a classic tradition, handed down from generation to generation, which, while it never enslaved nor constrained the mind, showed it the road followed by past ages, and established the communion of a whole nation in its light. Many a German spirit—like birds strayed in the night—came winging towards the distant beacon. But who is there in France can dream of the power of the sympathy which drives so many generous hearts from the neighboring nation towards France! So many hands stretched out: hands that are not responsible for the aims of the politicians! . . . And you see no more of us, our brothers in Germany, though we say to you: "Here are our hands. In spite of lies and hatred, we will not be parted. We have need of you, you have need of us, to build the greatness of our spirits and our people. We are the two wings of the West. If one be broken, there is an end of flight! Let the war come! It will not break the clasp of our hands or the flight of our genius in brotherhood."

So thought Christophe. He felt the mutual completion which the two races could give each other, and how lame and halting were the spirit, the art, the action of each without the help of the other. For his own part, born in the Rhine-lands where the two civilizations mingle in one stream, from his childhood he had instinctively felt their inevitable union; all through his

life the unconscious effort of his genius had been to maintain the balance and equilibrium of the two mighty wings. The greater was his wealth of Germanic dreams, the more he needed the Latin clarity of mind and order. It was for this reason that France was so dear to him. In France he had the joy of better knowledge and mastery of himself. Only in France was he wholly himself.

He turned to account all the elements that were or might be noxious to him. He assimilated foreign energy in his own. A vigorous healthy mind absorbs every kind of force, even that which is hostile to it, and makes it bone and flesh of its bone and flesh. There even comes a time when a man is most attracted by what least resembles him, for therein he finds his most plentiful nourishment.

Christophe did in fact find more pleasure in the work of artists who were set up as his rivals than in the work of his imitators:—for he had imitators who called themselves his disciples, to his great despair. They were honest, laborious, estimable, and altogether virtuous people who were full of respect and veneration for him. Christophe would have given much if he could have liked their music; but—(it was just his luck!)—he could not do it: he found it meaningless. He was a thousand times more pleased with the talent of musicians who were personally antipathetic to him, and in art represented tendencies hostile to his own. . . . Well! What did it matter? These men were at least alive! Life is, in itself, such a virtue, that, if a man be deprived of it, though he possess all the other virtues, he will never be a really good man, for he cannot really be a man. Christophe used jokingly to say that the only disciples he recognized were the men who attacked him. And when a young artist came and talked to him about his musical vocation, and tried to win his sympathy by flattering him, Christophe would say:

"So. My music satisfies you? That is how you would express your love, or your hatred?"

"Yes, master."

"Well. Don't. You have nothing to say."

His horror of the submissive temper of mind, of men born to obey, his need of absorbing other ideas than his own, attracted

him to circles whose ideas were diametrically opposed to his own. He had friends among men to whom his art, his idealistic faith, his moral conceptions, were a dead letter: they had absolutely different ways of envisaging life, love, marriage, the family, every social relationship:—but they were good fellows, though they seemed to belong to another stage of moral evolution: the anguish and the scruples that had consumed a part of Christophe's life were incomprehensible to them. No doubt that was all the better for them! Christophe had no desire to make them understand. He did not ask others to confirm his ideas by thinking as he did: he was sure of his own thoughts. He asked them to let him know their thoughts, and to love their souls. He asked always to know and to love more, to see and to learn how to see. He had reached the point not only of admitting in others tendencies of mind that he had once combated, but also of rejoicing in them, for they seemed to him to contribute to the fecundity of the universe. He loved Georges the more because he did not take life tragically, as he did. Humanity would be too poor and too gray in color if it were to be uniformly clad in the moral seriousness, and the heroic restraint with which Christophe was armed. Humanity needed joy, carelessness, irreverent audacity in face of its idols, all its idols, even the most holy. Long live "the Gallic salt which revives the world"! Skepticism and faith are no less necessary. Skepticism, riddling the faith of yesterday, prepares the way for the faith of to-morrow. . . . How clear everything becomes to the man who stands away from life, and, as in a fine picture, sees the contrasting colors merge into a magical harmony, where, when they were closely seen, they clashed.

Christophe's eyes had been opened to the infinite variety of the material, as of the moral, world. It had been one of his greatest conquests since his first visit to Italy. In Paris he especially sought the company of painters and sculptors; it seemed to him that the best of the French genius was in them. The triumphant audacity with which they pursued and captured movement, vibrant color, and tore away the veils that cover life, made his heart leap with delight. The inexhaustible riches that he who has eyes to see can find in a drop of light, a second of life! Against such sovereign delights of the mind what matters

the vain tumult of dispute and war? . . . But dispute and war also are a part of the marvelous spectacle. We must embrace everything, and, valiantly, joyously, fling into the crucible of our burning hearts both the forces of denial and the forces of affirmation, enemies and friends, the whole metal of life. The end of it all is the statue which takes shape in us, the divine fruit of our minds; and all is good that helps to make it more beautiful even at the cost of the sacrifice of ourselves. What does the creator matter? Only that which is created is real. . . . You cannot hurt us, ye enemies who seek to reach us with your hostility. We are beyond the reach of your attacks. . . . You are rending the empty cloak. I have been gone this many a day.

His music had found a more serene form. No longer did it show the storms of spring, which gathered, burst, and disappeared in the old days, but, instead, the white clouds of summer, mountains of snow and gold, great birds of light, slowly soaring, and filling the sky. . . . Creation. Ripening crops in the calm August sunlight. . . .

At first a vague, mighty torpor, the obscure joy of the full grape, the swollen ear of corn, the pregnant woman brooding over her ripe fruit. A buzzing like the sound of an organ; the hive all alive with the hum of the bees. . . . Such somber, golden music, like an autumn honeycomb, slowly gives forth the rhythm which shall mark its path: the round of the planets is made plain: it begins to spin. . . .

Then the will appears. It leaps onto the back of the whinnying dream as it passes, and grips it with its knees. The mind recognizes the laws of the rhythm which guides it: it tames the disordered forces and fixes the path they shall take, the goal towards which they shall move. The symphony of reason and instinct is organized. The darkness grows bright. On the long ribbon of the winding road, at intervals, there are brilliant fires, which in their turn shall be in the work of creation the nucleus of little planetary worlds linked up in the girdle of their solar system. . . .

The main lines of the picture are henceforth fixed. Now it looms through the uncertain light of dawn. Everything is

becoming definite: the harmony of the colors, the outline of the figures. To bring the work to its close all the resources of his being are brought into requisition. The scent-box of memory is opened and exhales its perfumes. The mind unchains the senses: it lets them wax delirious and is silent: but, crouching there, it watches them and chooses its prey. . . .

All is ready: the team of workmen carries out, with the materials snatched from the senses, the work planned by the mind. A great architect must have good journeymen who know their trade and will not spare themselves.—The cathedral is finished.

"And God looked down on his work. And He saw that *it was not yet good.*"

The Master's eyes take in the whole of His creation, and His hand perfects its harmony. . . .

The dream is ended. *Te Deum.* . . .

The white clouds of summer, like great birds of light, slowly soar and hover; and the heavens are filled with their widespread wings.

And yet his life was very far from being one with his art. A man of his kind cannot do without love, not merely that equable love which the spirit of an artist sheds on all things in the world, but a love that knows *preference:* he must always be giving himself to the creatures of his choice. They are the roots of the tree. Through them his heart's blood is renewed.

Christophe's heart's blood was nothing like dried up. He was steeped in a love which was the best part of his joy, a twofold love, for Grazia's daughter and Olivier's son. He united them in thought, and was to unite them in reality.

Georges and Aurora had met at Colette's: Aurora lived in her cousin's house. She spent part of the year in Rome and the rest in Paris. She was eighteen: Georges five years older. She was tall, erect, elegant, with a small head, and an open countenance, fair hair, a dark complexion, a slight down on her lips, bright eyes with a laughing expression behind which lay busy thoughts, a rather plump chin, brown hands, beautiful round strong arms, and a fine bust, and she always looked gay,

proud, and worldly. She was not at all intellectual, hardly at all sentimental, and she had inherited her mother's careless indolence. She would sleep eleven hours on end. The rest of the time she spent in lounging and laughing, only half awake. Christophe called her *Dornröschen*—the Sleeping Beauty. She reminded him of his old love, Sabine. She used to sing as she went to bed, and when she got up, and laugh for no reason at all, with merry childish laughter, and then gulp it down with a sort of hiccough. It were impossible to tell how she spent the time. All Colette's efforts to equip her with the brilliant artificiality which is so easily imposed on the mind of a young girl, like a kind of lacquered varnish, had been wasted: the varnish would not hold. She learned nothing: she would take months to read a book, and would like it immensely, though in a week she would forget both its title and its subject: without the least embarrassment she would make mistakes in spelling, and when she spoke of learned matters she would fall into the most comical blunders. She was refreshing in her youth, her gaiety, her lack of intellectuality, even in her faults, her thoughtlessness which sometimes amounted to indifference, and her naïve egoism. She was always so spontaneous. Young as she was, and simple and indolent, she could when she pleased play the coquette, though in all innocence: then she would spread her net for young men and go sketching, or play the nocturnes of Chopin, or carry books of poetry which she had not read, and indulge in conversations and hats that were about equally idealistic.

Christophe would watch her and laugh gently to himself. He had a fatherly tenderness, indulgent and teasing, for Aurora. And he had also a secret feeling of worship for the woman he had loved who had come again with new youth for another love than his. No one knew the depth of his affection. Only Aurora ever suspected it. From her childhood she had almost always been used to having Christophe near her, and she used to regard him as one of her family. In her old sorrow at being less loved than her brother she had instinctively drawn near to Christophe. She divined that he had a similar sorrow; he saw her grief: and though they never exchanged confidences, they shared each other's feelings. Later, when she discovered

the feeling that united her mother and Christophe, it seemed to her that she was in the secret, though they had never told her. She knew the meaning of the message with which Grazia had charged her as she lay dying, and of the ring which was now on Christophe's hand. So there existed hidden ties between her and Christophe, ties which she did not need to understand, to feel them in their complexity. She was sincerely attached to her old friend, although she could never have made the effort necessary to play or to read his work. Though she was a fairly good musician, she had never even had the curiosity to cut the pages of a score he had dedicated to her. She loved to come and have an intimate talk with him.—She came more often when she found out that she might meet Georges Jeannin in his rooms.

And Georges, too, found an extraordinary interest in Christophe's company.

However, the two young people were slow to realize their real feelings. They had at first looked at each other mockingly. They were hardly at all alike. He was quicksilver, she was still water. But it was not long before quicksilver tried to appear more at rest, and sleeping water awoke. Georges would criticise Aurora's clothes, and her Italian taste—a slight want of feeling for modulation and a certain preference for crude colors. Aurora used to delight in teasing Georges, and imitating his rather hurried and precious way of speaking. And while they laughed at each other, they both took pleasure . . . in laughing, or in entertaining each other? They used to entertain Christophe too, and, far from gainsaying them, he would maliciously transpose these little poisoned darts from one to the other. They pretended not to care: but they soon discovered that they cared only too much; and both, especially Georges, being incapable of concealing their annoyance, as soon as they met they would begin sparring. Their wounds were slight: they were afraid of hurting each other: and the hand which dealt the blow was so dear to the recipient of it that they both found more pleasure in the hurts they received than in those they gave. They used to watch each other curiously, and their eyes, seeking defects, would find only attractions. But they would not admit it. Each, to Christophe, would declare that the other

was unbearable, but, for all that, they were not slow to seize every opportunity of meeting that Christophe gave them.

One day when Aurora was with her old friend to tell him that she would come and see him on the following Sunday in the morning, Georges rushed in, like a whirlwind as usual, to tell Christophe that he was coming on Sunday afternoon. On Sunday morning Christophe waited in vain for Aurora. At the hour mentioned by Georges she appeared, and asked him to forgive her because it had been impossible for her to come in the morning: she embroidered her excuses with a circumstantial story. Christophe was amused by her innocent roguery, and said:

"It is a pity. You would have seen Georges: he came and lunched with me; but he would not stay this afternoon."

Aurora was discomfited, and did not listen to anything Christophe said. He went on talking good-humoredly. She replied absently, and was not far from being cross with him. Came a ring at the bell. It was Georges. Aurora was amazed. Christophe looked at her and laughed. She saw that he had been making fun of her, and laughed and blushed. He shook his finger at her waggishly. Suddenly she ran and kissed him warmly. He whispered to her:

"*Biricchina, ladroncella, furbetta. . . .*"

And she laid her hand on his lips to silence him.

Georges could make nothing of their kissing and laughter. His expression of astonishment, almost of vexation, added to their joy.

So Christophe labored to bring the two young people together. And when he had succeeded he was almost sorry. He loved them equally; but he judged Georges more hardly: he knew his weakness: he idolized Aurora, and thought himself responsible for her happiness even more than for Georges's; for it seemed to him that Georges was as a son to him, a part of himself, and he wondered whether it was not wrong to give Aurora in her innocence a companion who was very far from sharing it.

But one day as he passed by an arbor where the two young people were sitting—(a short time after their betrothal)—his heart sank as he heard Aurora laughingly questioning Georges

about one of his past adventures, and Georges telling her, nothing loth. Other scraps of conversation, which they made no attempt to disguise, showed him that Aurora was far more at home than himself with Georges's moral ideas. Though they were very much in love with each other it was clear that they did not regard themselves as bound forever; into their discussions of questions relating to love and marriage, they brought a spirit of liberty, which might have a beauty of its own, though it was singularly at variance with the old ideal of mutual devotion *usque ad mortem*. And Christophe would look at them a little sadly. . . . How far they were from him already! How swiftly does the ship that bears our children speed on! . . . Patience! A day will come when we shall all meet in harbor.

Meanwhile the ship paid no heed to the way marked out for it: it trimmed its sails to every wind.—It would have seemed natural for the spirit of liberty, which was then tending to modify morality, to take up its stand also in the other domains of thought and action. But it did nothing of the kind: human nature cares little for contradiction. While morality was becoming more free, the mind was becoming less so; it was demanding that religion should restore its yoke. And this twofold movement in opposite directions was, with a magnificent defiance of logic, taking place in the same souls. Georges and Aurora had been caught up by the new current of Catholicism which was conquering many people of fashion and many intellectuals. Nothing could be more curious than the way in which Georges, who was naturally critical and perfectly irreligious, skepticism being to him as easy as breathing, Georges, who had never cared for God or devil—a true Frenchman, laughing at everything—suddenly declared that there lay the truth. He needed truth of some sort, and this sorted well with his need of action, his atavistic French bourgeois characteristics, and his weariness of liberty. The young fool had wandered long enough, and he returned of his own accord to be harnessed to the plow of his race. The example of a number of his friends was enough for him. Georges was hypersensitive to the least atmospheric pressure of the ideas that surrounded him, and he was one of the first to be caught. And Aurora followed him, as she would have followed him anywhere. At once they felt

sure of themselves, and despised everybody who did not think as they did. The irony of it! These two frivolous children were sincerely devout, while the moral purity, the serious and ardent efforts of Grazia and Olivier had never helped them to be so, in spite of their desire.

Christophe watched their spiritual evolution with sympathetic curiosity. He did not try to fight against it, as Emmanuel would have done, for Emmanuel's free idealism was up in arms against this return of the ancient foe. It is vain to fight against the passing wind. One can only wait for it to go. The reason of humanity was exhausted. It had just made a gigantic effort. It was overcome with sleep, and, like a child worn out by a long day, before going to sleep, it was saying its prayers. The gate of dreams had reopened; in the train of religion came little puffs of theosophy, mysticism, esoteric faiths, occultism to visit the chambers of the Western mind. Even philosophy was wavering. Their gods of thought, Bergson and William James, were tottering. Even science was attainted, even science was showing the signs of the fatigue of reason. We have a moment's respite. Let us breathe. To-morrow the mind will awake again, more alert, more free. . . . Sleep is good when a man has worked hard. Christophe, who had had little time for it, was happy that these children of his should enjoy it in his stead, and should have rest for the soul, security of faith, absolute, unshakable confidence in their dreams. He would not nor could he have exchanged his lot for theirs. But he thought that Grazia's melancholy and Olivier's distress of mind had found solace in their children, and that it was well.

"All that we have suffered, I, my friends, and so many others whom I never knew, others who lived before us, all has been, that these two might attain joy. . . . The joy, Antoinette, for which thou wast made, the joy that was refused thee! . . . Ah! If only the unhappy could have a foretaste of the happiness that will one day spring forth from the sacrifice of their lives!"

What purpose could be served by his trying to dispute their happiness? We must not try to make others happy in our way, but in their own. At most he only asked Georges and Aurora

not to be too contemptuous of those who, like himself, did not share their faith.

They did not even take the trouble to argue with him. They seemed to say to each other:

"He cannot understand. . . ."

In their eyes he belonged to the past. And, to be frank, they did not attach much importance to the past. When they were alone they used often to talk innocently of the things they would do when Christophe "was no longer with them." . . . —However, they loved him well. . . . How terrible are the children who grow up over us like creepers! How terrible is the force of Nature, hurrying, hurrying, driving us out. . . .

"Go! Go! Remove thyself! It is my turn now! . . ."

Christophe, overhearing their thoughts, longed to say to them:

"Don't be in such a hurry! I am quite happy here. Please regard me still as a living being."

He was amused by their naïve impertinence.

"You may as well say straight out," he observed one day when they had crushed him with their disdainful manner. "You may as well say that I am a stupid old man."

"No, no, my dear old friend," said Aurora, laughing heartily. "You are the best of men, but there are some things that you do not know."

"And that you do know, my girl? You are very wise!"

"Don't laugh at me. I know nothing much. But Georges knows."

Christophe smiled:

"Yes. You are right, my dear. The man you love always knows."

It was much more difficult for him to tolerate their music than to put up with their intellectual superiority. They used to try his patience severely. The piano was given no rest when they were in his rooms. It seemed that love had roused them to song, like the birds. But they were by a long way not so skilled in singing. Aurora had no illusions as to her talent, but she was quite otherwise about her fiancé: she could see no difference between Georges's playing and Christophe's. Perhaps she preferred Georges's style, and Georges, in spite of his ironic

subtlety, was never far from being convinced by his sweetheart's belief in him. Christophe never contradicted them: maliciously he would concur in the girl's opinion (except when, as sometimes happened, he could bear it no longer, and would rush away, banging the doors). With an affectionate, pitying smile he would listen to Georges playing *Tristan* on the piano. The unhappy young man would conscientiously apply himself to the transcription of the formidable pages with all the amiable sweetness of a young girl, and a young girl's tender feeling. Christophe used to laugh to himself. He would never tell the boy why he laughed. He would kiss him. He loved him as he was. Perhaps he loved him the more for it. . . . Poor boy! . . . Oh! the vanity of art! . . .

He used often to talk about "his children"—(for so he called them)—to Emmanuel. Emmanuel, who was fond of Georges, used jokingly to say that Christophe ought to hand him over to him. He had Aurora, and it was not fair. He was grabbing everything.

Their friendship had become almost legendary in Parisian society, though they lived apart from it. Emmanuel had grown passionately devoted to Christophe, though his pride would not let him show it. He covered it up with his brusque manners, and sometimes used to be absolutely rude to Christophe. But Christophe was not deceived. He knew how deeply attached to him Emmanuel was, and he knew the worth of his affection. No week went by but they met two or three times. When they were prevented by ill-health from going out, they used to write to each other. Their letters might have been written from places far removed from Paris. They were less interested in external happenings than in the progress of the mind in science and art. They lived in their ideas, pondering their art, or beneath the chaos of facts perceiving the little undistinguished gleam which reveals the progress of the history of the human mind.

Generally it was Christophe who visited Emmanuel. Although, since a recent illness, he was not much better in health than his friend, he had grown used to thinking that Emmanuel's health called for more consideration than his own. Christophe

could not now ascend Emmanuel's six flights of stairs without difficulty, and when he reached the top he had to wait a moment to recover his breath. They were both incapable of taking care of themselves. In defiance of their weak throats and their fits of despondency, they were inveterate smokers. That was one of the reasons why Christophe preferred that they should meet in Emmanuel's rooms rather than in his own, for Aurora used to declare war on his habit of smoking, and he used to hide away from her. Sometimes they would both break out coughing in the middle of their conversation, and then they would break off and look at each other guiltily like schoolboys, and laugh: and sometimes one would lecture the other while he was coughing; but as soon as he had recovered his breath the other would vigorously protest that smoking had nothing to do with it.

On Emmanuel's table, in a clear space among the papers, a gray cat would sit and gravely look at the smokers with an air of reproach. Christophe used to say that it was their living conscience, and, by way of stifling it, he would cover it up with his hat. It was a wretched beast, of the commonest kind, that Emmanuel had picked up half-dead in the street; it had never really recovered from the brutal handling it had received, and ate very little, and hardly ever played, and never made any noise: it was very gentle, and used to follow its master about with its intelligent eyes, and be unhappy when he was absent, and quite content to sit on the table by his side, only breaking off its musing ecstatically, for hours together, to watch the cage where the inaccessible birds fluttered about, purring politely at the least mark of attention, patiently submitting to Emmanuel's capricious, and Christophe's rough, attentions, and always being very careful not to scratch or bite. It was very delicate, and one of its eyes was always weeping: it used to cough: and if it had been able to speak it would certainly not have had the effrontery, like the two men, to declare that "the smoke had nothing to do with it"; but it accepted everything at their hands, and seemed to think:

"They are men. They know what they are doing."

Emmanuel was fond of the beast because he saw a certain similarity between its lot and his own. Christophe used to

declare that the resemblance was even extended to the expression in their eyes.

"Why not?" Emmanuel would say.

Animals reflect their surroundings. Their faces grow refined or the reverse according to the people with whom they live. A fool's cat has a different expression from that of a clever man's cat. A domestic animal will become good or bad, frank or sly, sensitive or stupid, not only according to what its master teaches it, but also according to what its master is. And this is true not only of the influence of men. Places fashion animals in their own image. A clear, bright landscape will light up the eyes of animals.—Emmanuel's gray cat was in harmony with the stuffy garret and its ailing master, who lived under the Parisian sky.

Emmanuel had grown more human. He was not the same man that he had been at the time of his first acquaintance with Christophe. He had been profoundly shaken by a domestic tragedy. His companion, whom, in a moment of exasperation, he had made too clearly feel how tiresome the burden of her affection was to him, had suddenly disappeared. Frantic with anxiety, he spent a whole night looking for her, and at last he found her in a police station where she was being retained. She had tried to throw herself into the Seine; a passer-by had caught hold of her by the clothes, and pulled her back just as she was clambering over the parapet of the bridge; she had refused to give her name and address, and made another attempt on her life. The sight of her grief had overwhelmed Emmanuel; he could not bear the thought that, having suffered so much at the hands of others, he, in his turn, was causing suffering. He brought the poor crazed creature back to his rooms, and did his best to heal the wound he had dealt her, and to win her back to the confidence in his affection she so sorely needed. He suppressed his feeling of revolt, and resigned himself to her absorbing love, and devoted to her the remainder of his life. The whole sap of his genius had rushed back to his heart. The apostle of action had come to the belief that there was only one course of action that was really good—not to do evil. His part was played. It seemed that the Force which raises the great human tides had used him only as an instrument, to

let loose action. Once his orders were carried out, he was nothing: action pursued its way without him. He watched it moving on, almost resigned to the injustice which touched him personally, though not altogether to that which concerned his faith. For although, as a free-thinker, he claimed to be free of all religion and used humorously to call Christophe a clerical in disguise, like every sturdy spirit, he had his altar on which he deified the dreams to which he sacrificed himself. The altar was deserted now, and Emmanuel suffered. How could he without suffering see the blessed ideas, which he had so hardly led to victory, the ideas for which, during the last hundred years, all the finest men had suffered such bitter torment—how could he see them tramped underfoot by the oncoming generation? The whole magnificent inheritance of French idealism—the faith in Liberty, which had its saints, martyrs, heroes, the love of humanity, the religious aspiration towards the brotherhood of nations and races—all, all was with blind brutality pillaged by the younger generation! What madness is it in them that makes them sigh for the monsters we had vanquished, submit to the yoke that we had broken, call back with great shouts the reign of Force, and kindle Hatred and the insanity of war in the heart of my beloved France!

"It is not only in France," Christophe would say laughingly, "it is throughout the entire world. From Spain to China blows the same keen wind. There is not a corner anywhere for a man to find shelter from the wind! It is becoming a joke: even in my little Switzerland, which is turning nationalist!"

"You find that comforting?"

"Certainly. It shows that such waves of feeling are not due to the ridiculous passions of a few men, but to a hidden God who controls the universe. And I have learned to bow before that God. If I do not understand Him, that is my fault, not His. Try to understand Him. But how many of you take the trouble to do that? You live from day to day, and see no farther than the next milestone, and you imagine that it marks the end of the road. You see the wave that bears you along, but you do not see the sea! The wave of to-day is the wave of yesterday; it is the wave of our souls that prepared the way for it. The wave of to-day will plow the ground for

the wave of to-morrow, which will wipe out its memory as the memory of ours is wiped out. I neither admire nor dread the naturalism of the present time. It will pass away with the present time: it is passing, it has already passed. It is a rung in the ladder. Climb to the top of it! It is the advance-guard of the coming army. Hark to the sound of its fifes and drums! . . ."

(Christophe drummed on the table, and woke the cat, which sprang away.)

". . . Every nation now feels the imperious necessity of gathering its forces and making up its balance-sheet. For the last hundred years all the nations have been transformed by their mutual intercourse and the immense contributions of all the brains of the universe, building up new morality, new knowledge, new faith. Every man must examine his conscience, and know exactly what he is and what he has, before he can enter with the rest into the new age. A new age is coming. Humanity is on the point of signing a new lease of life. Society is on the point of springing into new vigor with new laws. It is Sunday to-morrow. Every one is making up his accounts for the week, setting his house in order, making it clean and tidy, that, with other men, we may go into the presence of our common God and make a new compact of alliance with Him."

Emmanuel looked at Christophe, and his eyes reflected the passing vision. He was silent for some time after Christophe had finished speaking, and then he said:

"You are lucky, Christophe! You do not see the night!"

"I can see in the dark," said Christophe. "I have lived in it enough. I am an old owl."

About this time his friends noticed a change in his manner. He was often distracted and absent-minded. He hardly listened to what was said to him. He had an absorbed, smiling expression. When his absent-mindedness was commented upon he would gently excuse himself. Sometimes he would speak of himself in the third person:

"Krafft will do that for you. . . ."

or,

"Christophe will laugh at that. . . ."

People who did not know him said:

"What extraordinary self-infatuation!"

But it was just the opposite. He saw himself from the outside, as a stranger. He had reached the stage when a man loses interest even in the struggle for the beautiful, because, when a man has done his work, he is inclined to believe that others will do theirs, and that, when all is told, as Rodin says, "the beautiful will always triumph." The malevolence and injustice of men did not repel him.—He would laugh and tell himself that it was not natural, that life was ebbing away from him.

In fact, he had lost much of his old vigor. The least physical effort, a long walk, a fast drive, exhausted him. He quickly lost his breath, and he had pains in his heart. Sometimes he would think of his old friend Schulz. He never told anybody what he was feeling. It was no good. It was useless to upset his friends, and he would never get any better. Besides he did not take his symptoms seriously. He far more dreaded having to take care of himself than being ill.

He had an inward presentiment and a desire to see his country once more. He had postponed going from year to year, always saying—"next year. . . ." Now he would postpone it no longer.

He did not tell any one, and went away by stealth. The journey was short. Christophe found nothing that he had come to seek. The changes that had been in the making on his last visit were now fully accomplished: the little town had become a great industrial city. The old houses had disappeared. The cemetery also was gone. Where Sabine's farm had stood was now a factory with tall chimneys. The river had washed away the meadows where Christophe had played as a child. A street (and such a street!) between black buildings bore his name. The whole of the past was dead, even death itself. . . . So be it! Life was going on: perhaps other little Christophes were dreaming, suffering, struggling, in the shabby houses in the street that was called after him.—At a concert in the gigantic *Tonhalle* he heard some of his music played, all topsy-turvy: he hardly recognized it. . . . So be it! Though it were misunderstood it might perhaps arouse new energy. We

sowed the seed. Do what you will with it: feed on us.—At nightfall Christophe walked through the fields outside the city; great mists were rolling over them, and he thought of the great mists that should enshroud his life, and those whom he had loved, who were gone from the earth, who had taken refuge in his heart, who, like himself, would be covered up by the falling night. . . . So be it! So be it! I am not afraid of thee, O night, thou devourer of suns! For one star that is put out, thousands are lit up. Like a bowl of boiling milk, the abysm of space is overflowing with light. Thou shalt not put me out. The breath of death will set the flame of my life flickering up once more. . . .

On his return from Germany, Christophe wanted to stop in the town where he had known Anna. Since he had left it, he had had no news of her. He had never dared to ask after her. For years her very name was enough to upset him. . . . —Now he was calm and had no fear. But in the evening, in his room in the hotel looking out on the Rhine, the familiar song of the bells ringing in the morrow's festival awoke the images of the past. From the river there ascended the faint odor of distant danger, which he found it hard to understand. He spent the whole night in recollection. He felt that he was free of the terrible Lord, and found sweet sadness in the thought. He had not made up his mind what to do on the following day. For a moment—(the past lay so far behind!)—he thought of calling on the Brauns. But when the morrow came his courage failed him: he dared not even ask at the hotel whether the doctor and his wife were still alive. He made up his mind to go. . . .

When the time came for him to go an irresistible force drove him to the church which Anna used to attend: he stood behind a pillar from which he could see the seat where in old days she used to come and kneel. He waited, feeling sure that, if she were still alive, she would come.

A woman did come, and he did not recognize her. She was like all the rest, plump, full-faced, with a heavy chin, and an indifferent, hard expression. She was dressed in black. She sat down in her place, and did not stir. There was nothing in the woman to remind Christophe of the woman he was ex-

pecting. Only once or twice she made a certain queer little gesture as though to smooth out the folds of her skirt about her knees. In old days, *she* had made such a gesture. . . . As she went out she passed slowly by him, with her head erect and her hands holding her prayer-book, folded in front of her. For a moment her somber, tired eyes met Christophe's. And they looked at each other. And they did not recognize each other. She passed on, straight and stiff, and never turned her head. It was only after a moment that suddenly, in a flash of memory, beneath the frozen smile, he recognized the lips he had kissed by a certain fold in them. . . . He gasped for breath and his knees trembled. He thought:

"Lord, is that the body in which she dwelt whom I loved? Where is she? Where is she? And where am I, myself? Where is the man who loved her? What is there left of us and the cruel love that consumed us?—Ashes. Where is the fire?"

And his God answered and said:

"In Me."

Then he raised his eyes and saw her for the last time in the crowd passing through the door into the sunlight.

It was shortly after his return to Paris that he made peace with his old enemy, Lévy-Cœur, who had been attacking him for a long time with equal malicious talent and bad faith. Then, having attained the highest success, glutted with honors, satiated, appeased, he had been clever enough secretly to recognize Christophe's superiority, and had made advances to him. Christophe pretended to notice neither attacks nor advances. Lévy-Cœur wearied of it. They lived in the same neighborhood and used often to meet. As they passed each other Christophe would look through Lévy-Cœur, who was exasperated by this calm way of ignoring his existence.

He had a daughter between eighteen and twenty, a pretty, elegant girl, with a profile like a lamb, a cloud of curly fair hair, soft coquettish eyes, and a Luini smile. They used to go for walks together, and Christophe often met them in the Luxembourg Gardens; they seemed very intimate, and the girl would walk arm-in-arm with her father. Absent-minded though

he was, Christophe never failed to notice a pretty face, and he had a weakness for the girl. He would think of Lévy-Cœur:

"Lucky beast!"

But then he would add proudly:

"But I too have a daughter."

And he used to compare the two. In the comparison his bias was all in favor of Aurora, but it led him to create in his mind a sort of imaginary friendship between the two girls, though they did not know each other, and even, without his knowing it, to a certain feeling for Lévy-Cœur.

When he returned from Germany he heard that "the lamb" was dead. In his fatherly selfishness his first thought was:

"Suppose it had been mine!"

And he was filled with an immense pity for Lévy-Cœur. His first impulse was to write to him: he began two letters, but was not satisfied, was ashamed of them, and did not send either. But a few days later when he met Lévy-Cœur with a weary, miserable face, it was too much for him: he went straight up to the poor wretch and held out both hands to him. Lévy-Cœur, with a little hesitation, took them in his. Christophe said:

"You have lost her! . . ."

The emotion in his voice touched Lévy-Cœur. It was so unexpected! He felt inexpressibly grateful. . . . They talked for a little sadly and confusedly. When they parted nothing was left of all that had divided them. They had fought: it was inevitable, no doubt: each man must fulfil the law of his nature! But when men see the end of the tragi-comedy coming, they put off the passions that masked them, and meet face to face,—two men, of whom neither is of much greater worth than the other, who, when they have played their parts to the best of their ability, have the right in the end to shake hands.

The marriage of Georges and Aurora had been fixed for the early spring. Christophe's health was declining rapidly. He had seen his children watching him anxiously. Once he heard them whispering to each other. Georges was saying:

"How ill he looks! He looks as though he might fall ill at any moment."

And Aurora replied:

"If only he does not delay our marriage!"

He did not forget it. Poor children! They might be sure that he would not disturb their happiness!

But he was inconsiderate enough on the eve of the marriage—(he had been absurdly excited as the day drew near: as excited as though it were he who was going to be married)—he was stupid enough to be attacked by his old trouble, a recurrence of pneumonia, which had first attacked him in the days of the Market-Place. He was furious with himself, and dubbed himself fool and idiot. He swore that he would not give in until the marriage had taken place. He thought of Grazia as she lay dying, never telling him of her illness because of his approaching concert, for fear lest he should be distracted from his work and pleasure. Now he loved the idea of doing for her daughter—for her—what she had done for him. He concealed his condition, but he found it hard to keep himself going. However, the happiness of his children made him so happy that he managed to support the long ordeal of the religious ceremony without disaster. But he had hardly reached Colette's house than his strength gave out: he had just time enough to shut himself up in a room, and then he fainted. He was found by a servant. When he came to himself Christophe forbade them to say anything to the bride and bridegroom, who were going off on their honeymoon in the evening. They were too much taken up with themselves to notice anything else. They left him gaily, promising to write to him to-morrow, and afterwards. . . .

As soon as they were gone, Christophe took to his bed. He was feverish, and could not shake off the fever. He was alone. Emmanuel was ill too, and could not come. Christophe did not call in a doctor. He did not think his condition was serious. Besides, he had no servant to go for a doctor. The housekeeper who came for two hours in the morning took no interest in him, and he dispensed with her services. He had a dozen times begged her not to touch any of his papers when she was dusting his room. She would do it: she thought she had a fine opportunity to do as she liked, now that he was confined to his bed. In the mirror of his wardrobe door he saw her from his bed

turning the whole room upside down. He was so furious—(no, assuredly the old Adam was not dead in him!)—that he jumped out of bed, snatched a packet of papers out of her hands, and showed her the door. His anger cost him a bout of fever and the departure of the servant, who lost her temper and never returned, without even taking the trouble to tell the "old madman," as she called him. So he was left, ill, with no one to look after him. He would get up in the morning to take in the jug of milk left at the door, and to see if the portress had not slipped under the door the promised letter from the lovers. The letter did not come: they had forgotten him in their happiness. He was not angry with them, and thought that in their place he would have done the same. He thought of their careless joy, and that it was he had given it to them.

He was a little better and was able to get up when at last a letter came from Aurora. Georges had been content to add his signature. Aurora asked very little about Christophe and told very little, but, to make up for it, she gave him a commission, begging him to send her a necktie she had left at Colette's. Although it was not at all important—(Aurora had only thought of it as she sat down to write to Christophe, and then only because she wanted something to say),—Christophe was only too delighted to be of use, and went out at once to fetch it. The weather was cold and gusty. The winter had taken an unpleasant turn. Melting snow, and an icy wind. There were no carriages to be had. Christophe spent some time in a parcels' office. The rudeness of the clerks and their deliberate slowness made him irritable, which did not help his business on. His illness was partly responsible for his gusts of anger, which the tranquillity of his mind repudiated; they shook his body, like the last tremors of an oak falling under the blows of an ax. He returned chilled and trembling. As he entered, the portress handed him a cutting from a review. He glanced at it. It was a spiteful attack upon himself. They were growing rare in these days. There is no pleasure in attacking a man who never notices the blows dealt him. The most violent of his enemies were reduced to a feeling of respect for him, which exasperated them, for they still detested him.

"*We believe,*" said Bismarck, almost regretfully, "*that noth-*

ing is more involuntary than love. Respect is even more so. . . ."

But the writer of the article was one of those strong men, who, being better armed than Bismarck, escape both respect and love. He spoke of Christophe in insulting terms, and announced a series of attacks during the following fortnight: Christophe began to laugh, and said as he went to bed again:

"He will be surprised! He won't find me at home!"

They tried to make him have a nurse, but he refused obstinately, saying that he had lived alone so much that he thought he might at least have the benefit of his solitude at such a time.

He was never bored. During these last years he had constantly been engrossed in dialogues with himself; it was as though his soul was twofold; and for some months past his inward company had been considerably augmented: not two souls, but ten, now dwelt in him. They held converse among themselves, though more often they sang. He would take part in their conversation, or he would hold his peace and listen to them. He had always on his bed, or on the table, within reach of his hand, music-paper on which he used to take down their remarks and his own, and laugh at their rejoinders. It was a mechanical habit: the two actions, thinking and writing, had become almost simultaneous with him; writing was thinking out loud to him. Everything that took him away from the company of his many souls exhausted and irritated him, even the friends he loved best, sometimes. He tried hard not to let them see it, but such constraint induced an extreme lassitude. He was very happy when he came to himself again, for he would lose himself: it was impossible to hear the inward voices amid the chattering of human beings. Divine silence! . . .

He would only allow the portress or one of her children to come three or four times a day to see if he needed anything. He used to give them the notes which, up to the last, he exchanged with Emmanuel. They were almost equally ill, and were under no illusion as to their condition. By different ways the free religious genius of Christophe and the free irreligious genius of Emmanuel had reached the same brotherly serenity. In their wavering handwriting, which they found it more and more difficult to read, they discoursed, not of their illness, but

of the perpetual subject of their conversations, their art, and the future of their ideas.

This went on until the day when, with his failing hand, Christophe wrote the words of the King of Sweden, as he lay dying on the field of battle:

"Ich habe genug, Bruder: rette dich!" *

As a succession of stages he looked back over the whole of his life: the immense effort of his youth to win self-possession, his desperate struggles to exact from others the bare right to live, to wrest himself from the demons of his race. And even after the victory, the forced unending vigil over the fruits of conquest, to defend them against victory itself. The sweetness, the tribulation of friendship opening up the great human family through conflict to the isolated heart. The fullness of art, the zenith of life. His proud dominion over his conquered spirit. His belief that he had mastered his destiny. And then, suddenly at the turn of the road, his meeting with the knights of the Apocalypse, Grief, Passion, Shame, the vanguard of the Lord. Then laid low, trampled underfoot by the horses, dragging himself bleeding to the heights, where, in the midst of the clouds, flames the wild purifying fire. His meeting face to face with God. His wrestling with Him, like Jacob with the Angel. His issue, broken from the fight. His adoration of his defeat, his understanding of his limitations, his striving to fulfil the will of the Lord, in the domain assigned to him. Finally, when the labors of seed-time and harvest, the splendid hard work, were at an end, having won the right to rest at the feet of the sunlit mountains, and to say to them:

"Be ye blessed! I shall not reach your light, but very sweet to me is your shade. . . ."

Then the beloved had appeared to him: she had taken him by the hand; and death, breaking down the barrier of her body, had poured the pure soul of the beloved into the soul of her lover. Together they had issued from the shadow of days, and they had reached the happy heights where, like the three Graces, in a noble round, the past, the present, and the future, clasped

* "I have had my fill, brother: save thyself!"

hands, where the heart at rest sees griefs and joys in one moment spring to life, flower, and die, where all is Harmony. . . .

He was in too great a hurry. He thought he had already reached that place. The vise which gripped his panting bosom, and the tumultuous whirl of images beating against the walls of his burning brain, reminded him that the last stage and the hardest was yet to run. . . . Onward! . . .

He lay motionless upon his bed. In the room above him some silly woman would go on playing the piano for hours. She only knew one piece, and she would go on tirelessly repeating the same bars; they gave her so much pleasure! They were a joy, an emotion to her; every color, every kind of form was in them. And Christophe could understand her happiness, but she made him weep with exasperation. If only she would not hit the keys so hard! Noise was as odious to Christophe as vice. . . . In the end he became resigned to it. It was hard to learn not to hear. And yet it was less difficult than he thought. He would leave his sick, coarse body. How humiliating it was to have been shut up in it for so many years! He would watch its decay and think:

"It will not go on much longer."

He would feel the pulse of his human egoism and wonder:

"Which would you prefer? To have the name and personality of Christophe become immortal and his work disappear, or to have his work endure and no trace be left of his personality and name?"

Without a moment's hesitation he replied:

"Let me disappear and my work endure! My gain is twofold: for only what is most true of me, the real truth of myself will remain. Let Christophe perish! . . ."

But very soon he felt that he was becoming as much a stranger to his work as to himself. How childish was the illusion of believing that his art would endure! He saw clearly not only how little he had done, but how surely all modern music was doomed to destruction. More quickly than any other the language of music is consumed by its own heat; at the end of a century or two it is understood only by a few initiates. For

how many do Monteverdi and Lully still exist? Already the oaks of the classic forest are eaten away with moss. Our buildings of sound, in which our passions sing, will soon be empty temples, will soon crumble away into oblivion.—And Christophe was amazed to find himself gazing at the ruins untroubled.

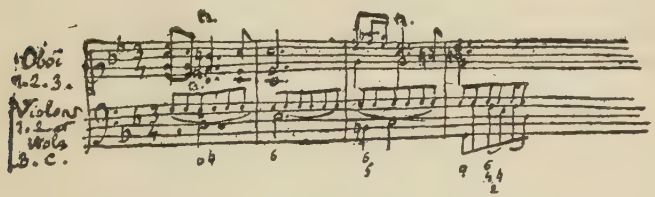
"Have I begun to love life less?" he wondered.

But at once he understood that he loved it more. . . . Why weep over the ruins of art? They are not worth it. Art is the shadow man casts upon Nature. Let them disappear together, sucked up by the sun's rays! They prevent my seeing the sun.—The vast treasure of Nature passes through our fingers. Human intelligence tries to catch the running water in the meshes of a net. Our music is an illusion. Our scale of sounds is an invention. It answers to no living sound. It is a compromise of the mind between real sounds, the application of the metric system to the moving infinite. The mind needs such a lie as this to understand the incomprehensible, and the mind has believed the lie, because it wished to believe it. But it is not true. It is not alive. And the delight which the mind takes in this order of its own creation has only been obtained by falsifying the direct intuition of what is. From time to time, a genius, in passing contact with the earth, suddenly perceives the torrent of reality, overflowing the continents of art. The dykes crack for a moment. Nature creeps in through a fissure. But at once the gap is stopped up. It must be done to safeguard the reason of mankind. It would perish if its eyes met the eyes of Jehovah. Then once more it begins to strengthen the walls of its cell, which nothing enters from without, except it have first been wrought upon. And it is beautiful, perhaps, for those who will not see. . . . But for me, I will see Thy face, Jehovah! I will hear the thunder of Thy voice, though it bring me to nothingness. The noise of art is an hindrance to me. Let the mind hold its peace! Let man be silent! . . .

But a few minutes after this harangue he groped for one of the sheets of paper that lay scattered on his bed, and he tried to write down a few more notes. When he saw the contradiction of it, he smiled and said:

"Oh, my music, companion of all my days, thou art better

than I. I am an ingrate: I send thee away from me. But thou wilt not leave me: thou wilt not be repulsed at my caprice. Forgive me. Thou knowest these are but whimsies. I have never betrayed thee, thou hast never betrayed me; and we are sure of each other. We will go home together, my friend. Stay with me to the end.

Bleib bei uns. . . .

He awoke from a long torpor, heavy with fever and dreams. Strange dreams of which he was still full. And now he looked at himself, touched himself, sought and could not find himself. He seemed to himself to be "another." Another, dearer than himself. . . . Who? . . . It seemed to him that in his dreams another soul had taken possession of him. Olivier? Grazia? . . . His heart and his head were so weak! He could not distinguish between his loved ones. Why should he distinguish between them? He loved them all equally.

He lay bound in a sort of overwhelming beatitude. He made no attempt to move. He knew that sorrow lay in ambush for him, like a cat waiting for a mouse. He lay like one dead. Already. . . . There was no one in the room. Overhead the piano was silent. Solitude. Silence. Christophe sighed.

"How good it is to think, at the end of life, that I have never been alone even in my greatest loneliness! . . . Souls that I have met on the way, brothers, who for a moment have held out their hands to me, mysterious spirits sprung from my mind, living and dead—all living.—O all that I have loved, all that I have created! Ye surround me with your warm embrace, ye watch over me. I hear the music of your voices. Blessed be destiny, that has given you to me! I am rich, I am rich. . . . My heart is full! . . ."

He looked out through the window. . . . It was one of those beautiful sunless days, which, as old Balzac said, are like a beautiful blind woman. . . . Christophe was passionately absorbed in gazing at the branch of a tree that grew in front of the window. The branch was swelling, the moist buds were bursting, the little white flowers were expanding; and in the flowers, in the leaves, in the whole tree coming to new life, there was such an ecstasy of surrender to the new-born force of spring, that Christophe was no longer conscious of his weariness, his depression, his wretched, dying body, and lived again in the branch of the tree. He was steeped in the gentle radiance of its life. It was like a kiss. His heart, big with love, turned to the beautiful tree, smiling there upon his last moments. He thought that at that moment there were creatures loving each other, that to others this hour, that was so full of agony for him, was an hour of ecstasy, that it is ever thus, and that the puissant joy of living never runs dry. And in a choking voice that would not obey his thoughts—(possibly no sound at all came from his lips, but he knew it not)—he chanted a hymn to life.

An invisible orchestra answered him. Christophe said within himself:

"How can they know? We did not rehearse it. If only they can go on to the end without a mistake!"

He tried to sit up so as to see the whole orchestra, and beat time with his arms outstretched. But the orchestra made no mistake; they were sure of themselves. What marvelous music! How wonderfully they improvised the responses! Christophe was amused.

"Wait a bit, old fellow! I'll catch you out."

And with a tug at the tiller he drove the ship capriciously to left and right through dangerous channels.

"How will you get out of that? . . . And this? Caught! . . . And what about this?"

But they always extricated themselves: they countered all his audacities with even bolder ventures.

"What will they do now? . . . The rascals! . . ."

Christophe cried "bravo!" and roared with laughter.

"The devil! It is becoming difficult to follow them! Am

I to let them beat me? . . . But, you know, this is not a game! I'm done, now. . . . No matter! They shan't say that they had the last word. . . ."

But the orchestra exhibited such an overpoweringly novel and abundant fancy that there was nothing to be done but to sit and listen open-mouthed. They took his breath away. . . . Christophe was filled with pity for himself.

"Idiot!" he said to himself. "You are empty. Hold your peace! The instrument has given all that it can give. Enough of this body! I must have another."

But his body took its revenge. Violent fits of coughing prevented his listening:

"Will you hold your peace?"

He clutched his throat, and thumped his chest, wrestled with himself as with an enemy that he must overthrow. He saw himself again in the middle of a great throng. A crowd of men were shouting all around him. One man gripped him with his arms. They rolled down on the ground. The other man was on top of him. He was choking.

"Let me go. I will hear! . . . I will hear! Let me go, or I'll kill you! . . ."

He banged the man's head against the wall, but the man would not let him go.

"Who is it, now? With whom am I wrestling? What is this body that I hold in my grasp, this body warm against me? . . ."

A crowd of hallucinations. A chaos of passions. Fury, lust, murderous desires, the sting of carnal embraces, the last stirring of the mud at the bottom of the pond. . . .

"Ah! Will not the end come soon? Shall I not pluck you off, you leeches clinging to my body? . . . Then let my body perish with them!"

Stiffened in shoulders, loins, knees, Christophe thrust back the invisible enemy. . . . He was free. . . . Yonder, the music was still playing, farther and farther away. Dripping with sweat, broken in body, Christophe held his arms out towards it:

"Wait for me! Wait for me!"

He ran after it. He stumbled. He jostled and pushed his way. . . . He had run so fast that he could not breathe.

His heart beat, his blood roared and buzzed in his ears, like a train rumbling through a tunnel. . . .

"God! How horrible!"

He made desperate signs to the orchestra not to go on without him. . . . At last! He came out of the tunnel! . . . Silence came again. He could hear once more.

"How lovely it is! How lovely! Encore! Bravely, my boys! . . . But who wrote it, who wrote it? . . . What do you say? You tell me that Jean-Christophe Krafft wrote it? Oh! come! Nonsense! I knew him. He couldn't write ten bars of such music as that! . . . Who is that coughing? Don't make such a noise! . . . What chord is that? . . . And that? . . . Not so fast! Wait! . . ."

Christophe uttered inarticulate cries; his hand, clutching the quilt, moved as if it were writing: and his exhausted brain went on mechanically trying to discover the elements of the chords and their consequents. He could not succeed: his emotion made him drop his prize. He began all over again. . . . Ah! This time it was too difficult. . . .

"Stop, stop. . . . I can no more. . . ."

His will relaxed utterly. Softly Christophe closed his eyes. Tears of happiness trickled down from his closed lids. The little girl who was looking after him, unknown to him, piously wiped them away. He lost all consciousness of what was happening. The orchestra had ceased playing, leaving him on a dizzy harmony, the riddle of which could not be solved. His brain went on saying:

"But what chord is that? How am I to get out of it? I should like to find the way out, before the end. . . ."

Voices were raised now. A passionate voice. Anna's tragic eyes. . . . But a moment and it was no longer Anna. Eyes now so full of kindness. . . .

"Grazia, is it thou? . . . Which of you? Which of you? I cannot see you clearly. . . . Why is the sun so long in coming?"

Then bells rang tranquilly. The sparrows at the window chirped to remind him of the hour when he was wont to give them the breakfast crumbs. . . . In his dream Christophe saw the little room of his childhood. . . . The bells. Now

it is dawn! The lovely waves of sound fill the light air. They come from far away, from the villages down yonder. . . . The murmuring of the river rises from behind the house. . . . Once more Christophe stood gazing down from the staircase window. All his life flowed before his eyes, like the Rhine. All his life, all his lives, Louisa, Gottfried, Olivier, Sabine. . . .

"Mother, lovers, friends. . . . What are these names? . . . Love. . . . Where are you? Where are you, my souls? I know that you are there, and I cannot take you."

"We are with thee. Peace, O beloved!"

"I will not lose you ever more. I have sought you so long!"

"Be not anxious. We shall never leave thee more."

"Alas! The stream is bearing me on."

"The river that bears thee on, bears us with thee."

"Whither are we going?"

"To the place where we shall be united once more."

"Will it be soon?"

"Look."

And Christophe, making a supreme effort to raise his head—(God! How heavy it was!)—saw the river overflowing its banks, covering the fields, moving on, august, slow, almost still. And, like a flash of steel, on the edge of the horizon there seemed to be speeding towards him a line of silver streams, quivering in the sunlight. The roar of the ocean. . . . And his heart sank, and he asked:

"Is it He?"

And the voices of his loved ones replied:

"It is He!"

And his brain dying, said to itself:

"The gates are opened. . . . That is the chord I was seeking! . . . But it is not the end! There are new spaces! . . .—We will go on, to-morrow."

O joy, the joy of seeing self vanish into the sovereign peace of God, whom all his life he had so striven to serve! . . .

"Lord, art Thou not displeased with Thy servant? I have done so little. I could do no more. . . . I have struggled, I have suffered, I have erred, I have created. Let me draw breath in Thy Father's arms. Some day I shall be born again for a new fight."

And the murmuring of the river and the roaring of the sea sang with him:

"Thou shalt be born again. Rest. Now all is one heart. The smile of the night and the day entwined. Harmony, the august marriage of love and hate. I will sing the God of the two mighty wings. Hosanna to life! Hosanna to death!

"Christofori faciem die quacunque tueris,
Illa nempe die non morte mala morieris."

Saint Christophe has crossed the river. All night long he has marched against the stream. Like a rock his huge-limbed body stands above the water. On his shoulders is the Child, frail and heavy. Saint Christophe leans on a pine-tree that he has plucked up, and it bends. His back also bends. Those who saw him set out vowed that he would never win through, and for a long time their mockery and their laughter followed him. Then the night fell and they grew weary. Now Christophe is too far away for the cries of those standing on the water's brink to reach him. Through the roar of the torrent he hears only the tranquil voice of the Child, clasping a lock of hair on the giant's forehead in his little hand, and crying: "March on."— And with bowed back, and eyes fixed straight in front of him on the dark bank whose towering slopes are beginning to gleam white, he marches on.

Suddenly the Angelus sounds, and the flock of bells suddenly springs into wakefulness. It is the new dawn! Behind the sheer black cliff rises the golden glory of the invisible sun. Almost falling Christophe at last reaches the bank, and he says to the Child:

"Here we are! How heavy thou wert! Child, who art thou?"

And the Child answers:

"I am the day soon to be born."

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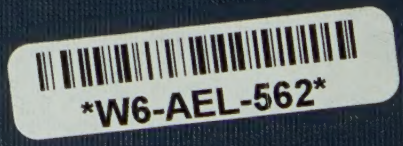
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